

GUZ 54

1Timothy

*Bible Commentary:
David Guzik TEV - LIV*

David Guzik

David Guzik's Commentary On
54 1Timothy
Biblical Text – TEV (Good News Bible)

Greeting

1Ti 1:1 Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ according to a command of God our Savior, even the Lord Jesus Christ, our Hope,

1Ti 1:2 to Timothy, a true child in the faith: Grace, mercy, peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Warning Against False Teachers

1Ti 1:3 Even as I called on you to remain in Ephesus, (I going to Macedonia), that you might charge some not to teach other doctrines,

1Ti 1:4 nor to give heed to fables and to endless genealogies, which occasion doubts, rather than a stewardship of God in faith,

1Ti 1:5 but the end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience, and faith not pretended,

1Ti 1:6 from which having missed the mark, some turned aside to empty talking,

1Ti 1:7 wishing to be teachers of law, neither understanding what they say, nor about that which they confidently affirm.

1Ti 1:8 And we know that the Law is good, if anyone uses it lawfully,

1Ti 1:9 knowing this, that law is not laid down for a righteous one, but for lawless and undisciplined ones, for ungodly and sinful ones, for unholy and profane ones, for slayers of fathers and slayers of mothers, for murderers,

1Ti 1:10 for fornicators, for homosexuals, for slave-traders, for liars, for perjurors, and if any other thing opposes sound

doctrine,

1Ti 1:11 according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I was entrusted.

Christ Jesus Came to Save Sinners

1Ti 1:12 And I have thanks to Him empowering me, our Lord Jesus Christ, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry,

1Ti 1:13 the one who before was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and insolent; but I received mercy, because being ignorant I did it in unbelief.

1Ti 1:14 But the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with faith and love in Christ Jesus.

1Ti 1:15 Faithful is the Word and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

1Ti 1:16 But for this reason I received mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for an example to those being about to believe on Him to everlasting life.

1Ti 1:17 Now to the King eternal, incorruptible, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

1Ti 1:18 This charge I commit to you, my child Timothy, according to the prophecies going before as to you, that you might war the good warfare by them,

1Ti 1:19 having faith and a good conscience, which some having thrust away, made shipwreck concerning the faith,

1Ti 1:20 of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan, that they may be taught not to blaspheme.

1 Timothy 1:1-20

1 Timothy 1 - Fighting for the Faith

A. Introduction.

1. (1) *The identity of the author, Paul.*

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope.

a. **Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ:** Paul, in his self-description, emphasized his credentials (**apostle**) and his authority (**by the commandment of God**). He did this both as a *personal encouragement* to Timothy and so the letter could be used as a letter of reference before the Ephesian Christians.

i. It seems that 1 Timothy was written by the Apostle Paul to Timothy sometime after his release from Roman imprisonment as described at the end of the Book of Acts and was written from Macedonia (1Ti 1:3).

ii. Apparently, after his release (hoped for in Phm 1:22 and Php 1:25-26; Php 2:24), Paul returned to the city of Ephesus. There he discovered that during his absence Ephesus had become a storm center of false teaching. This was a sad fulfillment of the prediction he made to the Ephesian elders in Act 20:29-30.

iii. Paul probably dealt with the false teachers personally, but soon found it necessary to leave for Macedonia. He then left Timothy in charge of affairs at Ephesus, as his own personal representative. He knew that Timothy had a difficult job to carry out, so he hoped that this letter would both equip and encourage him in the task.

iv. "The use of this official title is an indication that the Pastoral Epistles were not merely private letters, but were intended to be read to the Churches committed to the charge of Timothy." (White)

b. **Our Savior:** At that very time, the title **Savior** was used to honor the Roman Emperor. People called, and were forced to call, Caesar Nero "savior." Paul made the identity of the *real* **Savior** clear: **God**, in the person of **the Lord Jesus Christ**.

i. White on **by the commandment of God:** "Here it is to be noted that the *command* proceeds equally from God and Christ Jesus. This language could hardly have been used if St. Paul conceived of Christ Jesus as a creature."

2. (2) *The identity of the recipient, Timothy.*

To Timothy, a true son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

a. **To Timothy:** The Book of Acts tells us that Timothy came from Lystra, a city in the province of Galatia (Act 16:1-3). He was the son of a Greek father (Act 16:2) and a Jewish mother named Eunice (2Ti 1:5). His mother and grandmother taught him the Scriptures from the time of Timothy's youth (2Ti 1:5; 2Ti 3:15).

b. **A true son in the faith:** Paul could consider Timothy **a true son in the faith** because he probably led him and his mother to faith in Jesus on Paul's first missionary journey (Act 14:8-20; Act 16:1). This also expressed Paul's confidence in Timothy's integrity and faithfulness to the truth.

c. **Grace, mercy, and peace:** This is a familiar greeting Paul used in his letters to congregations. Here, he also applied it to an individual. God grants His **grace, mercy, and peace** not only to churches, but also to the *individuals* who make up the churches.

i. Yet there is a difference. When Paul wrote to churches, he commonly only greeted them with

grace and **peace**. To both Timothy (also in 2Ti 1:2) and Titus (Tit 1:4) he added **mercy** to the greeting.

ii. "Not only grace and peace, as to others. When we pray for ministers, we must be more than ordinarily earnest for them with God. These three are joined together only in the Epistles of Timothy and Titus." (Trapp)

B. Paul urges Timothy to remain in Ephesus.

1. (3-4) Stay in Ephesus and stay with the Scriptures.

As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.

a. **Remain in Ephesus:** Though Timothy had a difficult task Paul wanted him to **remain in Ephesus** and continue the work. Before Paul left for **Macedonia**, he **urged** Timothy to **remain**, even though the work was difficult.

i. Paul told Timothy to **remain in Ephesus** because it seemed that Timothy wanted to give up and run away. Most everyone in ministry deals with this at some time; for a few it is a constant affliction. There was probably both external pressure and internal pressure for him to leave.

ii. We can think of many reasons why Timothy might *not* want to **remain in Ephesus**:

- He might have missed Paul and wanted to be with his mentor.
- He might have been intimidated by following Paul's ministry.

- He seems to have been somewhat timid or reserved by nature and was perhaps intimidated by the challenge.
- He might have been discouraged by the normal difficulties of ministry.
- He might have questioned his own calling.
- He might have been frustrated by the distracting and competing doctrines swirling around the Christians in Ephesus.

iii. Despite all these reasons, there is no doubt that God – and the Apostle Paul – wanted Timothy to **remain in Ephesus**, and in the rest of 1 Timothy 1, Paul gave Timothy at least six reasons why he should stay there and finish the ministry God gave him to do.

- Because they need the truth (1Ti 1:3-7).
- Because you minister in a hard place (1Ti 1:8-11).
- Because God uses unworthy people (1Ti 1:12-16).
- Because you serve a great God (1Ti 1:17).
- Because you are in a battle and cannot surrender (1Ti 1:18).
- Because not everyone else does (1Ti 1:19-20).

iv. God will allow us to be in difficult situations. We must set our minds to meet the challenge, or we will surely give up. Many years ago a famous Arctic explorer put this ad in a London newspaper: "Men wanted for hazardous journey, small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful. Honor and recognition in case of success." Thousands of men responded to the appeal because they were willing to embrace a difficult job when called to do so by a great leader.

b. **That you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine:** Paul left Timothy with an important job to do, making it all the more important that he **remain in Ephesus**. The job was to make sure that correct **doctrine** was taught in Ephesus.

i. **No other doctrine:** Paul left the Ephesian Christians with a particular set of teachings (which he had received from Jesus and the Old Testament). He was concerned that Timothy did everything he could to make sure the Ephesians *continue* in that doctrine. This was the first reason why it was important that Timothy remain in Ephesus.

ii. Paul did this because **doctrine** is important to God and *should* be important to His people. Today, *what* one believes – that is, their **doctrine** - is remarkably *unimportant* to most people. This spirit of the modern age has also heavily influenced modern Christians. We live in a day where Pilate's question *What is truth?* (Joh 18:38) is answered, "Whatever it means to *you*." Yet truth is important to God and should be to His people.

c. **That you may charge some:** Paul's concern was not primarily that Timothy himself would begin to teach wrong doctrine. His concern was that Timothy would allow others to spread these other doctrines. Timothy had to stand firm against difficult people and **charge some that they teach no other doctrine**. No wonder Timothy felt like leaving Ephesus.

i. In the ancient Greek, **charge** is a military word. It means "To give strict orders from a commanding officer" (Wiersbe). Timothy wasn't to present the *option* of correct doctrine to these **some** in Ephesus. He was to *command* it like a military officer.

d. **Nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies:**

It seems that the great danger of these teachings (**fables and endless genealogies**) was that they were *silly distractions*. Timothy had to **remain in Ephesus** so that he could command others to ignore these speculative and silly distractions.

i. It wasn't that there was an elaborate anti-Jesus theology rising in Ephesus. It was more that they tended to get carried away by emphasizing the wrong things. Paul wanted to prevent the corruption that came when people gave authority to **fables and endless genealogies** instead of true doctrine. *Silly distractions* were also dangerous, because they took the place of **godly edification which is in faith**.

ii. Perhaps the **endless genealogies** had to do with Gnostic-type theories of "emanations" from God. Perhaps they were connected with Jewish-type legalism that sought righteousness by virtue of one's ancestry. Or perhaps he had in mind doctrinal systems based on mystic readings of Old Testament genealogies.

iii. Ancient Jewish writings have been discovered which dig into the most complex genealogies, connecting them with wild speculations about spiritual mysteries. A consuming interest in these kinds of things will crowd out **godly edification which is in faith**.

e. **Cause disputes rather than godly edification:** The eventual fruit of these man-made diversions is evident. Though they may be popular and fascinating in the short term, in the long run they don't strengthen God's people in faith.

i. "Discourses that turn to no profit; a great many words and little sense; and that sense not worth the

pains of hearing." (Clarke)

2. (5-7) *The purpose of the commandment.*

Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.

a. **The purpose of the commandment:** The purpose of the law is found in its inward work upon the heart, not in mere outward observance. Without this understanding, it is easy to become shallow legalists who are only concerned with outward performance and appearance.

b. **Love from a pure heart:** This suggests the idea that the problem in Ephesus was along Jewish-type legalistic lines. They misunderstood the commandment and the law.

i. If spending time in God's word does not produce **love from a pure heart, a good conscience**, or

sincere faith in us, something is wrong. Legalism may make us twist God's word, so that instead of showing **love** we are harsh and judgmental; instead of having a **good conscience** we always feel condemned knowing we don't measure up; and instead of **sincere faith** we practically trust in our own ability to please God.

c. **Idle talk:** This probably has in mind vain speculations about the Scriptures, which may have had analytical and entertainment value but were never meant to be our spiritual diet.

i. In the King James Version, **idle talk** is translated *vain jangling* - the idea is of meaningless babble.

d. **Understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm:** The problem people in Ephesus did not even understand the implications of their own teaching.

3. (8-11) *Paul's condemnation of legalists is not a condemnation of the law itself.*

But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurors, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.

a. **But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully:** The purpose of the law is to show us our sin, not to lead us to righteousness (as in Gal 3:24-25). It wasn't made for the **righteous person** (who walks by faith according to Gal 3:11) but for the **lawless and insubordinate**, to show them their sin.

i. The idea isn't that the law has *nothing* to say to the **righteous person**, but that it especially speaks to the ungodly. On the phrase, **The law is not made for a righteous person**, Clarke observed that the word for **made** "Refers to the custom of writing laws on boards, and hanging them up in public places within reach of every man, that they might be read by all; thus all would see against whom the law lay."

b. **For the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners:** In Paul's mind **sound doctrine** and right conduct are vitally connected. The

sinful *actions* described in verses 9 and 10 are **contrary to sound doctrine**.

- i. Many people will condemn anyone with standards — especially higher standards — as being a legalist. Having standards and keeping them does not make us legalists and obedience doesn't make us legalists. We are legalists when we think what we do is what makes us right before God.
- c. **If there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine:** The implication is that in Ephesus, the church existed in a culture marked by these sins listed in verses 9 and 10 and those teaching false doctrine in some way allowed or promoted this sinful lifestyle.
 - i. **If there is any other thing:** "For the apostle took no delight to mention more of this cursed crew; but leaves them to the law to handle and hamper them, as unruly beasts, dogs, lions, leopards, are chained and caged up that they may not do mischief" (Clarke).
 - ii. The apparently sinful environment of Ephesus shows us another reason why it was important for Timothy to *remain in Ephesus*. He should remain there because it was a difficult place to serve God and further the kingdom. He had to break up the fallow ground there, instead of running to an easier place to plow.
- d. **According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God:** Though the law cannot bring righteousness, **the glorious gospel of the blessed God** can — a gospel that, in the words of Paul, was **committed to his trust**. He sensed his responsibility to preserve and guard the gospel, and to pass it on to Timothy and others.

C. Paul's personal experience of the gospel.

1. (12-14) Why was Paul entrusted with the gospel?

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

- a. **I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me:** Paul was entrusted with the gospel because Jesus **enabled** Paul, and Paul thanked Jesus for that enabling. Paul was enabled for this ministry because he was **counted... faithful** for the ministry. Faithfulness made Paul ready to be used by God.
 - i. We often see our Christian service as a matter of volunteering. Yet as Christians, in regard to Jesus and His church, we are not volunteers. We are slaves. We are duty bound servants of Jesus, and faithfulness is expected of such servants.
 - ii. **He counted me faithful:** You don't have to be smart to be faithful; you don't have to be talented or gifted. Faithfulness is something very down-to-earth, and each of us can be faithful in the place God has placed us.
 - iii. Many people wait to be faithful. We tell ourselves, "I'll be faithful when I'm in such and such a position." That is foolish. We should be faithful right where we are at — our faithfulness is shown in the small things.
- b. **Putting me into the ministry: Ministry** simply means "service." In the original language of the New Testament, there is nothing high or spiritual about the word. It just means to work hard and serve. Yet for this

former blasphemer and persecutor of God's people, this was a great honor.

i. "After Paul was saved, he became a foremost saint. The Lord did not allot him a second-class place in the church. He had been the leading sinner, but his Lord did not, therefore, say, 'I save you, but I shall always remember your wickedness to your disadvantage.' Not so: he counted him faithful, putting him into the ministry and into the apostleship, so that he was not a whit behind the very chief of the apostles. Brother, there is no reason why, if you have gone very far in sin, you should not go equally far in usefulness." (Spurgeon)

c. **Although I was formerly:** Paul's past did not disqualify him from serving God. God's mercy and grace were enough to cover his past and enable him to serve God. We should never feel that our past makes us unable to be used by God.

i. With these words, Paul gave Timothy another reason to remain in Ephesus. It is likely that one reason Timothy wanted to leave Ephesus and his ministry there because he felt *unworthy* or *incapable* of the work. These words from Paul assured Timothy, "If there is anyone unworthy of disqualified, it should be me. Yet God found a way to use me, and He will use you also as you remain in Ephesus."

d. **Because I did it ignorantly in unbelief:** **Ignorance** and **unbelief** never excuse our sin, but they do invite God's **mercy**, because sin in **ignorance** and **unbelief** makes one less guilty than the believer who sins knowingly.

e. **The grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant:** It was not Paul's **ignorance** that saved him;

it was the **exceeding abundant** grace of God (God's *unmerited favor*).

2. (15) *Paul summarizes his personal experience of the gospel.*

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

a. **This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance:** This unusual phrase introduces a statement of special importance. Paul used this phrase 5 times – all in the Pastoral Epistles.

b. **Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners:** Jesus came to save **sinners**, not those living under the illusion of their own righteousness. As Jesus taught, it is the sick who need a physician (Mar 2:17).

i. Since Jesus came into the world to save **sinners**, this is the first necessary qualification for being a child of God - being a sinner. Sinners are not disqualified from coming to God, because Jesus came to save *them*.

ii. We also see the great danger in taking the terms *sin* and *sinner* out of our vocabulary. Many preachers deliberately do this today, because they don't want to offend anyone from the pulpit. But if Jesus came to save sinners, shouldn't we identify who those sinners are? How else will they come to salvation?

iii. "Even those who recognize that Christ's work is to save admit that it is more difficult to believe that this salvation belongs to sinners. Our mind is always prone to dwell on our own worthiness and, as soon as our unworthiness becomes apparent, our confidence fails. Thus the more a man feels the burden of his sins, he ought with greater courage to betake himself to

Christ, relying on what is here taught, that He came to bring salvation not to the righteous but to sinners.” (Calvin)

b. **Of whom I am chief:** Paul’s claim to be the **chief** of sinners was not an expression of a strange false humility. He genuinely felt his sins made him more accountable before God than others.

i. Aren’t we all equally sinners? No; “All men are truly sinners, but all men are not equally sinners. They are all in the mire; but they have not all sunk to an equal depth in it” (Spurgeon).

ii. Paul felt – rightly so – that his sins were worse because he was responsible for the death, imprisonment, and suffering of Christians, whom he persecuted before his life was changed by Jesus (Act 8:3; Act 9:1-2, 1Co 15:9, Gal 1:13, Php 3:6).

iii. In Act 26:11, Paul explained to Agrippa what might have been his worst sin: *And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.* He compelled others to blaspheme Jesus. “This, indeed, was a very horrible part of Saul’s sinfulness. To destroy their bodies was bad enough, but to destroy their souls too-to compel them to blaspheme, to speak evil of that name which they confessed to be their joy and their hope, surely that was the worst form that even persecution could assume. He forced them under torture to abjure the Christ whom their hearts loved. As it were he was not content to kill them, but he must damn them too” (Spurgeon).

iv. There are worse kinds of sin; sins that harm God’s people are especially bad in God’s eyes. We must soberly consider if we are guilty, now or in the past, of

harming God's people. "[God] remembers jests and scoffs leveled at his little ones, and he bids those who indulge in them to take heed. You had better offend a king than one of the Lord's little ones" (Spurgeon).

v. "Despair's head is cut off and stuck on a pole by the salvation of 'the chief of sinners.' No man can now say that he is too great a sinner to be saved, because the chief of sinners was saved eighteen hundred years ago. If the ringleader, the chief of the gang, has been washed in the precious blood, and is now in heaven, why not I? Why not you?" (Spurgeon)

3. (16) *Paul saved as a pattern of mercy to others.*

However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.

a. **However, for this reason I obtained mercy:** A man as bad as Paul has **obtained mercy**. This means that the door is open to others who are not as bad sinners as Paul was.

i. White expresses the idea of Paul: "Christ's longsuffering will never undergo a more severe test than it did in my case, so that no sinner need ever despair. Let us glorify God therefore."

b. **As a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him:** This explains another reason why God loves to save sinners. They become a **pattern** to those who are **going to believe on Him**. God wants others to see what He can do by working in us.

i. *This truth – the doctrine - that changed Paul's life was the truth he commanded Timothy to guard earlier in the chapter.*

ii. **As a pattern:** Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, understood that his life, conversion, and service to God was in some way a **pattern** to other believers.

4. (17) *Paul's praise to the God who saved him.*

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

a. **Now to the King eternal:** Paul could not think of how bad he was, and how great the salvation of God was, and how great the love of God was, without simply breaking into spontaneous praise.

b. **The King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise:** This outburst of praise shows that Paul both knew God and that he *loved* God.

i. He knew God to be **the King eternal**, ruling and reigning in complete power and glory.

ii. He knew God to be **immortal**, existing before anything else existed, and being the Creator of all things.

iii. He knew God to be **invisible**, not completely knowable by us; we can't completely figure out God, or know all His secrets.

iv. He knew God **alone is wise**, that He is God - and we are not. We think our plans and insights are so important, but only God really knows and understands all things.

c. **Be honor and glory forever and ever:** Knowing all this about God, Paul couldn't stop praising Him. If we ever have trouble worshipping God, it is because we don't know Him very well.

i. This description of God gave Timothy still another reason to remain in Ephesus. He could and should stay there when he considered the greatness of the God who he served. *This* great God was worthy of Timothy's sacrifice and could empower his service in Ephesus.

D. Paul's charge to Timothy: carry on the fight.

1. (18) The charge to fight the good fight.

This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare.

a. **This charge I commit to you:** Again, the Greek word for **charge** (*parangelia*) is the same as in 1Ti 1:3; it is a military word, referring to an order from a commanding officer.

i. At the same time the words **son Timothy** express a note of fatherly love. Paul was serious, but full of love. "There is a peculiar affectionate earnestness in this use of the personal name, here and in the conclusion of the letter" (White).

b. **According to the prophecies:** Paul wanted Timothy to consider what the Holy Spirit had said to him through others in the past, and receive the courage to remain in Ephesus from those.

i. Apparently, God had spoken to Timothy through others through the gift of prophecy and the words were an encouragement for Timothy to stay strong in the difficulty right in front of him. It may have been a description of Timothy's future ministry; it may have been a warning against being timid in his work for God. Whatever it was, God wanted Timothy to draw strength from it in his present difficulty.

ii. So, the **prophecies** Timothy had received before might have been predictive of his future ministry, or may have not been. *He who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men* (1Co 14:3). It may or may not be presented as an announcement of the future.

iii. We shouldn't think it strange that God would speak to us through others in a prophetic manner; but we must take care to test all prophesy (1Co 14:29) according to both the Word of God and the witness of the Holy Spirit in others.

iv. We must also be on guard against the extravagant prophecy; the one that declares that this person or that is going to have "the most powerful ministry the world has seen" or such. These prophecies are extremely manipulative, because they are awkward to speak against.

v. Today, in some circles, it isn't unusual to hear someone being declared as greater than Paul, Peter, Moses, or Elijah; declarations like "You will be a prophet like unto Daniel and receive an anointing ten times greater than any of your associates" are obviously extravagant and manipulative (because few will speak against it). These are rarely from God.

vi. Tom Stipe, in the foreword to *Counterfeit Revival*, wrote powerfully about this phenomenon, having been a leader in such circles before seeing the wrong in it all:

After only a couple of years, the prophets seemed to be speaking to just about everyone on just about everything. Hundreds of... members received the 'gift' of prophecy and began plying their trade among both leaders and parishioners. People began carrying around little notebooks filled with predictions that had

been delivered to them by the prophets and seers. They flocked to the prophecy conferences that had begun to spring up everywhere. The notebook crowd would rush forward in hopes of being selected to receive more prophecies to add to their prophetic diaries...

Not long after 'prophecy du jour' became the primary source of direction, a trail of devastated believers began to line up outside our pastoral counseling offices. Young people promised teen success and stardom through prophecy were left picking up the pieces of their shattered hopes because God had apparently gone back on His promises. Leaders were deluged by angry church members who had received prophecies about the great ministries they would have but had been frustrated by local church leaders who failed to recognize and 'facilitate' their 'new anointing.'

After a steady diet of the prophetic, some people were rapidly becoming biblically illiterate, choosing a 'dial-a-prophet' style of Christian living rather than studying God's Word. Many were left to continually live from one prophetic 'fix' to the next, their hope always in danger of failing because God's voice was so specific in pronouncement, yet so elusive in fulfillment. Possessing a prophet's phone number was like having a storehouse of treasured guidance. Little clutched notebooks replaced Bibles as the preferred reading material during church services.

c. **That by them you may wage the good warfare:** The focus is not the prophetic word Timothy heard in the past. The focus is on battle right in front of him now, where he must **wage the good warfare** - that is, "fight the good fight" (KJV).

- i. Timothy had a job in front of him, and it was going to be a battle. It wasn't going to be easy, or comfortable, or carefree. He had to approach the job Paul left him to do in Ephesus as a soldier approaches battle.
- ii. This gave Timothy still another reason to remain in Ephesus. He should sense a responsibility to stay when he felt like leaving because he was like a soldier in a battle, who could not desert his post.

2. (19) *Tools for the warfare: **faith and a good conscience**.*

Having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck.

- a. **Faith and a good conscience:** These are essential when battling for the Lord. They protect against the spiritual attacks of doubt and condemnation.
 - i. Timothy had to have the **faith** that God was in control, and would guide him as Timothy continued to seek him.
 - ii. He had to have **a good conscience**, because his enemies would be attacking him, and if Timothy had not conducted himself rightly, they would have good reason to attack. A **good conscience** isn't just a conscience that approves us, but one that approves us because we've been doing what is right – it is connected with good conduct.
- b. **Which some having rejected:** Some have **rejected** these weapons; specifically, Paul speaks of rejecting **the faith**; those who reject what Jesus and the apostles taught are headed for ruin (**shipwreck**).
 - i. **Which some having rejected:** "Having *thrust away*; as a fool-hardy soldier might his *shield* and his

breastplate or a made sailor pilot, helm, and compass" (Clarke).

ii. "We are not justified in interpreting *suffered shipwreck* as though it meant that they were lost beyond hope of recovery. St. Paul himself had suffered shipwreck at least four times (2Co 11:25) when he wrote this epistle. He had on each occasion lost everything except himself." (White)

3. (20) *Two people that rejected the tools for warfare.*

Of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

a. **Of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander:** We know nothing of **Hymenaeus and Alexander** other than what Paul said of them here. Paul apparently disciplined them for their disobedience to God in heresy, in conduct, or in both.

i. We see that Paul was not afraid to point out opponents of the truth by name, as he said to do in Rom 16:17. This was not a contradiction of Jesus' command not to judge (Mat 7:1-5) "While Christians are not to judge one another's motives or ministries, we are certainly expected to be honest about each other's conduct" (Wiersbe).

b. **Whom I delivered to Satan:** From other New Testament passages we can surmise that he did this by putting them outside the church, into the world, which is the devil's domain. The punishment was a removal of protection, not an infliction of evil.

i. The Lord protects us from many attacks from Satan (Job 1:10; Luk 22:31-32), and much of this protection comes to us in what we receive as we gather together as Christians.

ii. In this, Paul gave Timothy one more reason to remain in Ephesus. He should do it because *not everyone else does*. We can't simply act as if every Christian does what God wants them to and stays faithful to the gospel. The fact that some do not remain faithful to the end should give us more incentive to not give up.

Pray for All People

1Ti 2:1 First of all then, I exhort that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men,

1Ti 2:2 for kings and all the ones being in high position, that we may lead a tranquil and quiet existence in all godliness and dignity.

1Ti 2:3 For this is good and acceptable before God our deliverer,

1Ti 2:4 who desires all men to be delivered and to come to a full knowledge of truth.

1Ti 2:5 For God is one, also there is one Mediator of God and of men, the Man Christ Jesus,

1Ti 2:6 the One having given Himself a ransom on behalf of all, the testimony to be given in its own times,

1Ti 2:7 to which I was appointed a herald and apostle (I speak the truth in Christ, I do not lie), a teacher of the nations, in faith and truth.

1Ti 2:8 Therefore, I desire the men to pray in every place, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting.

1Ti 2:9 So also the women to adorn themselves in proper clothing, with modesty and sensibleness, not with plaiting, or gold, or pearls, or expensive garments,

1Ti 2:10 but what becomes women professing fear of God, through good works.

1Ti 2:11 Let a woman learn in silence, in all subjection.

1Ti 2:12 And I do not allow a woman to teach nor to exercise authority over a man, but to be in silence.

1Ti 2:13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve.

1Ti 2:14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived has come to be in transgression;

1Ti 2:15 but she will be kept safe through the childbearing, if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with sensibleness.

1 Timothy 2:1-15

1 Timothy 2 - Instructions for Public Worship

A. Public prayer.

1. (1) Pray for all men.

Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men.

a. **First of all:** This does not refer to time; it refers to importance. What comes next is of **first** importance in the heart and mind of Paul. Paul's broader context following is the public worship of Christians, so this begins a series of instructions for those meetings.

i. White translates the idea: "In the first place, let me remind you that the Church's public prayers must be made expressly for all men, from the Emperor downwards."

b. **Supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks:** These terms describe the wide categories of our communication with God. These are the kinds of prayer that should be offered when God's people come together.

- i. **Supplication** is simply *asking* for something. Prayer should never be all asking, but it *should* ask in bold confidence from God's Word.
- ii. **Prayers** is a broad word, referring to all communication with the Lord.
- iii. **Intercessions** refer to the requests we make on behalf of others. As we pray, there should be time when the needs of others find a place in our prayer before God's throne.
- iv. **Giving of thanks** is an essential part of our walk with God. Those who lack a basic sense of gratitude in their lives lack a basic Christian virtue.

c. **All men:** This tells us *whom* we are to pray for with these various means of prayer. The idea is that **all men** need prayer. You have never met someone that you cannot or should not pray for.

- i. Most Christians find it easy to pray for their family, friends, and loved ones, but it should not end there. We should also pray for our *enemies* and for those with whom we have conflict. We should pray for those who annoy us, and for those who seem to be against us. Each of these fall into the category of **all men**.
- ii. To pray for **all men** also means to pray *evangelistically*. We should pray for our friends who need to know Jesus, for our coworkers, and for others we have regular contact with.
- iii. To pray for **all men** also means to pray for your pastors, to pray for your church, and to pray for other ministries you know and love.

d. **Giving of thanks be made for all men:** We can find something to thank God for regarding **all men**. Even those who persecute us and are against us have a place in the over-arching plan of God.

2. (2) *Pray for those in authority.*

For kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.

a. **For kings and all who are in authority:** Early Christians were often accused of undermining the state because they claimed a higher Lord other than Caesar. Yet they would point out that they supported the state by being good citizens and by praying *for* the emperor, not *to* him.

i. In the previous verse Paul said that we should *give thanks* for all men, and here he connects the thought with those who are in authority over us. We should give thanks for those who are in authority, because God has ordained government in society to keep order (Rom 13:1-7).

ii. The early church leader Tertullian explained: "We pray for all the emperors, that God may grant them long life, a secure government, a prosperous family, vigorous troops, a faithful senate, an obedient people; that the whole world may be in peace; and that God may grant, both to Caesar and to every man, the accomplishment of their just desires." (Clarke)

b. **That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence:** We should pray for a government and rulers that would simply leave us alone and let us live as Christians.

i. Christians are to look for no special favors from the government. Our goal is a level playing field, unrestricted by state intervention.

ii. At the time Paul wrote this, Christianity was not yet an illegal religion in the Roman Empire and it was still considered a branch of Judaism. It was even more

reasonable to believe that the Roman government might just leave Christians alone to live their faith.

3. (3-4) *The goal of prayer for all men: That they would be saved.*

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

- a. **Who desires all men to be saved:** Prayer for those in authority should always have an evangelical purpose. Our real goal is that they would come under the authority of Jesus, and make decisions allowing the gospel to have free course and be glorified.
- b. **Who desires all men to be saved:** On a human level, we can certainly say that God **desires all men to be saved**. There is no one in such high authority that they don't need salvation in Jesus.
 - i. However, from a divine perspective, we understand there is a sense in which we can *not* say that God **desires all men to be saved** - otherwise, either all men would automatically *be saved*, or God would not have left an element of human response in the gospel.
 - ii. God's desire for all men to be saved is conditioned by His desire to have a genuine response from human beings. He won't fulfill His desire to save all men at the expense of making men robots that worship Him from simply being programmed to do so.
- c. **Who desires all men to be saved:** Because this is true (as seen from a human perspective), therefore the gospel must be presented to all without reservation. Any idea of limiting evangelism to the elect is absurd.
- d. **All men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth:** Salvation is clearly associated

with coming **to the knowledge of the truth**. One cannot be saved apart from at least some understanding of who Jesus is and what He has done to save us.

4. (5-7) *How all men must be saved.*

For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle; I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying; a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

a. **One God and one Mediator:** Through one Mediator, and One alone: **The Man Christ Jesus.** There is no valid way to God that does not come through Jesus.

i. This statement of Paul simply echoes what Jesus said in Joh 14:6 : *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."*

ii. It is also simply logical. If Jesus was at least a good and honest man, then He told the truth when He said that He was the only way to God. If He did not tell the truth at this important point, then it is difficult to regard Him as even a good or honest man, much less a prophet from God. If He was wrong then He was either a liar or a lunatic.

iii. In the modern world most people think that any road leads to God, *if followed sincerely or with a good heart.* The Bible argues against this idea.

- The Pharisee and the tax collector each came to God sincerely, but one was accepted, and one was not (Luk 18:9-14).
- The rich young ruler came to Jesus sincerely, but was rejected because he did not give up everything to follow Jesus (Luk 18:18-23).

- In Lev 10:1-3, the story of Nadab and Abihu – and God's judgment upon them – makes it clear that we cannot come to God any way we please, and that sincerity is not enough.
- Pro 14:12 is instructive: *There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.*

iv. Many people think that God would be unfair or narrow minded to have only one way to salvation; but the thought needs to be turned over. To say that God is unfair for this, one would have to look at Jesus dying on the cross – the spotless Son of God, came from heaven and lived humbly and died in horrific agony, both physical and spiritual – to look at Jesus on the cross and say, "Thanks God; I appreciate the gesture, but that *isn't enough*. You're going to have to do a little more than that, because that is only *one way* and if You are fair You will make *several ways*."

b. **The Man Christ Jesus:** This reminds us that Jesus is still human, even as He is enthroned in heaven right now. His humanity was not merely a temporary phase. When the Eternal Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, added humanity to His deity, He added it forever – not only for 33 years.

i. Jesus is still fully God and fully man, but His humanity is glorified and resurrected. It is the pattern of the humanity that we will experience in heaven.

c. **Who gave Himself:** Jesus gave **Himself**. You can give your time without giving yourself. You can give your money without giving yourself. You can give your opinion without giving yourself. You can even give your life without giving yourself. Jesus wants us to give ourselves, just as He **gave Himself**.

d. **Who gave Himself a ransom:** Jesus gave Himself as a *hostage*, as a payment for our sins. He put Himself in our place and received the punishment and wrath from God the Father that we deserved. This is the basic message of the gospel.

i. **A ransom for all:** There is enough in the work of Jesus on the cross for everyone. No one will be turned away because Jesus ran out of love or forgiveness at the cross for them.

e. **For which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle:** This was the message Paul preached. The message was of salvation only through Jesus, and Jesus crucified (as in 1Co 2:1-2).

f. **A teacher of the Gentiles:** Paul began his ministry with an equal emphasis to both Jew and Gentile (Acts 13), but because of continued rejection by Jews, Paul began to emphasize his ministry to the Gentiles.

B. Men and women in the church.

1. (8) *The role of men in leading prayer when the church gathers.*

I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

a. **That the men pray everywhere:** This has the idea of "In every church," and not of "In every place." Paul's focus is on what the church does when it comes together for meetings.

i. The idea that we should pray constantly and that prayer should be a normal part of our lives wherever we go is good and valid; but it is not what Paul means here.

ii. White on **everywhere:** "The directions are to apply to every Church without exception; no allowance is to

be made for the conditions peculiar to any locality."

b. **That the men:** Makes it clear Paul assumed **men** would take the lead at meetings of the congregation. Since the lifting up of hands was a common posture of prayer in ancient cultures, this text speaks of men leading public prayer - men representing the congregation before God's throne.

i. White translates the idea of the text: "The ministers of public prayer must be the men of the congregation, not the women."

c. **Lifting up holy hands:** Hands that are lifted up must be **holy** - hands that are set apart unto God, and not given over to evil.

d. **Without wrath and doubting:** Such prayers must be **without wrath** (praying "angry" prayers) and without **doubting** (praying without faith). When we pray angry, or pray without faith, we can do more bad than good - especially when the prayer is public.

i. "Having no vindictive feeling against any person; harboring no unforgiving spirit, while they are imploring pardon for their own offences." (Clarke)

2. (9-10) *Women should emphasize spiritual preparation and beauty more than physical preparation and beauty.*

In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.

a. **In like manner also:** The word **also** refers back to the statement *that the men pray everywhere* in 1Ti 2:8. Paul thought the principle of 1Ti 2:8 should apply in various congregations, and so should the principle in 1Ti 2:9.

b. **That the women adorn themselves in modest apparel:** This is how Christian women are supposed to dress, especially at their Christian meetings. The words **propriety and moderation** help explain what **modest apparel** is.

i. **Propriety** asks, "Is it appropriate for the occasion? Is it over-dressed or under-dressed? Is it going to call inappropriate attention to myself?" **Moderation** asks, "Is it moderate? Is it just too much – or far too little?" **Moderation** looks for a middle ground.

ii. The **braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing** Paul mentions were adornments that went against the principles of **propriety** and **moderation** in that culture.

iii. How you dress reflects your heart. If a man dresses in a casual manner, it says something about his attitude. Likewise, if a woman dresses in an immodest manner, it says something about her heart.

iv. "Woman has been invidiously defined: *An animal fond of dress.* How long will they permit themselves to be thus degraded?" (Clarke)

c. **But... with good works:** The most important adornment is **good works**. If a woman is dressed in propriety and moderation, with good works, she is perfectly dressed. **Good works** make a woman more beautiful than good jewelry.

3. (11-12) *Women are to show submission, and yield to the authority of the men God has appointed to lead in the church.*

Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.

a. **Let a woman learn in silence:** This unfortunate translation has led some to believe that it is forbidden for women to even speak in church meetings. Paul uses the same word translated **silence** in 1Ti 2:2, and it is translated *peaceable* there. The idea is *without contention* instead of total silence.

i. In other places in the New Testament, even in the writings of Paul, women are specifically mentioned as praying and speaking in the church (1Co 11:5). To **learn in silence** has the idea of women receiving the teaching of the men God has chosen to lead in the church, with **submission** instead of *contention*.

ii. **Submission** is the principle; to **learn in silence** describes the application of the principle.

iii. Some have said the reason for this is because in these ancient cultures (as well as some present-day cultures), men and women sat in separate sections. The thought is that women interrupted the church service by shouting questions and comments to their husbands during the service. Clarke expresses this idea: "It was lawful for *men* in public assemblies to ask questions, or even interrupt the speaker when there was any matter in his speech which they did not understand; but this liberty was not granted to *women*."

b. **With all submission:** The word for **submission** here literally means, "To be under in rank." It has to do with respecting an acknowledged order of authority. It certainly does not mean that men are more spiritual than women or that women are inferior to men.

i. "Anyone who has served in the armed forces knows that 'rank' has to do with order and authority, not with value or ability... Just as an army would be in confusion if there were no levels of authority, so

society would be in chaos without submission.”
(Wiersbe)

- c. **I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man:** Paul’s meaning seems clear. Women are not to have the role of teaching authority in the church. To be *under authority* is the principle; *not teaching* is the application.
 - i. Paul is saying that the church should not recognize women as those having authority in the church regarding matters of doctrine and Scriptural interpretation.
 - ii. Not all speaking or teaching by a woman is *necessarily* a violation of God’s order of authority in the church. Whatever speaking or teaching is done by a woman must be done in submission to the men God has appointed to lead the church.
 - iii. 1Co 11:1-12 emphasizes the same principle. Women are to always act *under authority* in the congregation, demonstrated in Corinthian culture by the wearing of a head covering. Therefore a woman in the Corinthian church could only pray or prophesy if she demonstrated that she was under the leadership of the church, and she demonstrated this by wearing a head covering and by acting consistently with that principle.
- d. **I do not permit:** The strength of Paul’s wording here makes it challenging to obey this command in today’s society. Since the 1970’s, our culture has rejected the idea that there may be different roles for men and women in the home, in the professional world, or in the church. In this text (among others), the Holy Spirit clearly says there *is* a difference in roles.

i. But the cultural challenge must be seen in its true context - not just a struggle between men and women, but as a struggle with the issue of authority in general. Since the 1960's, there has been a massive change in the way we see and accept authority.

- Citizens do not have the same respect for government's authority.
- Students do not have the same respect for teacher's authority.
- Women do not have the same respect for men's authority.
- Children do not have the same respect for parental authority.
- Employees do not have the same respect for their employer's authority.
- People do not have the same respect for the police's authority.
- Christians no longer have the same respect for church authority.

ii. There are not many who would say that these changes have been *good*. Generally, people do not feel safer and there is less confidence in the culture. Television and other entertainment gets worse and worse. In fact, our society is presently in, and rushing towards, complete anarchy - the state where no authority is accepted, and the only thing that matters is what one *wants* to do.

iii. It is fair to describe our present moral state as one of anarchy. There is no moral authority in our culture. When it comes to morality, the only thing that matters is what one wants to do. And in a civil sense,

many neighborhoods in our nation are given over to anarchy. The government's authority is not accepted in gang-infested portions of our cities. The only thing that matters is what one *wants* to do.

iv. We must see the broader attack on authority as a direct Satanic strategy to destroy our society and millions of individual lives. He is accomplishing this with two main attacks. First, the *corruption* of authority; second, the *rejection* of authority.

v. This idea of authority and submission to authority are so important to God that they are part of His very being. The First Person of the Holy Trinity is called the *Father*; the Second Person of the Holy Trinity is called the *Son*. Inherent in those titles is a relationship of authority and submission to authority. The Father exercises authority over the Son, and the Son submits to the Father's authority - and this is in the *very nature and being* of God. Our failure to exercise Biblical authority, and our failure to submit to Biblical authority, isn't just wrong and sad - it sins against the very nature of God. 1Sa 15:23 speaks to this same principle: *For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.*

e. **I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man:** Paul's focus here is the public worship of the church. God has established a clear chain of authority in both the home and in the church, and in those spheres, God has ordained that men are the "head" - that is, that they have the place of authority and responsibility.

i. Our culture, having rejected the idea of a difference in *role* between men and women, now rejects the idea of *any difference* between men and women. The driving trends in our culture point towards men who are more like women, and women who are more like

men. Styles, clothes, perfumes, and all the rest promote this thought.

ii. The Bible is just as specific that there is no *general* submission of women unto men commanded in society; only in the spheres of the home and in the church. God has not commanded in His word that men have exclusive authority in the areas of politics, business, education, and so on.

iii. It also does not mean that *every* woman in the church is under the authority of *every* man in the church. Instead it means that those who lead the church - pastors and ruling elders - must be men, and the women (and others) must respect their authority.

iv. The failure of men to lead in the home and in the church, and to lead in the way Jesus would lead, has been a chief cause of the rejection of male authority - and is inexcusable.

v. Some feel this recognition and submission to authority is an unbearable burden. They feel that it means, "I have to say that I am inferior, that I am nothing, and I have to recognize this other person as being superior." Yet inferiority or superiority has nothing to do with this. We remember the relationship between God the Father and God the Son - they are completely equal in their being, but have different roles when it comes to authority.

vi. Some may say that the church cannot work (or cannot work well) unless we go along with the times and put women into positions of spiritual and doctrinal authority in the church. From the standpoint of what works in our culture, they may be right. Yet from the standpoint of pleasing God by doing what He says in His word, they are wrong.

4. (13-14) Reasons for God's recognition of male authority in the church.

For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.

a. **For Adam was formed first:** The first reason for male authority in the church is order of creation. Adam (man) was created first, and given original authority on earth.

i. The first command God gave to the human race is found in Gen 2:16-17 : *Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.* This command was not given to woman at all. At the time that command was given, Eve was not yet created from Adam.

ii. Therefore, Adam received his command and his authority from God, and Eve received her command and authority from Adam.

b. **The woman being deceived:** The second reason is the difference in the sin of Adam and Eve, as connected to their difference in authority.

i. Both Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, and Eve clearly sinned first. Yet, the Bible never blames Eve for the fall of the human race, but always blames Adam (*through one man sin entered the world, Rom 5:12*). Adam is responsible because of there was a difference of authority. Adam had an authority Eve did not have; therefore he also had a responsibility Eve did not have. Adam failed in his responsibility in a far more significant way than Eve did.

ii. As well, Eve was **deceived**, and Adam **was not deceived**. Eve was tricked; but Adam sinned knowing exactly what he was doing when he rebelled. This means that though Adam's sin was worse, Eve's ability to be more readily deceived made her more dangerous in a place of authority. "Eve's reasoning faculty was at once overcome by the allegation of jealousy felt by God, an allegation plausible to a nature swayed by emotion rather than by reflection." (White)

iii. Generally speaking, it may be observed that women seem to be more spiritually sensitive than men - but this can be true for good or evil.

iv. **Adam . . . the woman:** "St. Paul says *woman* rather than *Eve*, emphasizing the sex rather than the individual, because he desires to give the incident its general application, especially in view of what follows." (White)

v. Significantly, these reasons are not dependent upon culture. Those who say "Paul was a sexist man in a sexist culture," and discount these words, are simply not reading what the Holy Spirit says in the sacred Scriptures here.

5. (15) *Being a Christian woman in light of Eve's curse.*

Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.

a. **Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing:** Many people regard this as one of the most difficult passages in the whole Bible. On the surface, it could be taken to mean that if a woman continues in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control, that God will bless her with survival in childbirth – which was no small promise in the ancient world.

- i. Yet this interpretation leaves many difficult questions. Is this an absolute promise? What about godly women who have died in childbirth? What about sinful women who have survived childbirth? Doesn't this seem like just a reward for good works, and not according to God's grace and mercy?
- b. **Saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self control:** Some approach this passage saying **saved** refers to gaining eternal life. Yet this interpretation is even more difficult. Are women saved eternally by giving birth to children - but only if they continue with godly virtues? What about women who *can't* have children? Are they denied salvation?
- c. **She will be saved in childbearing:** Some say that Paul "Has mostly in mind that child-bearing, not public teaching, is the peculiar function of woman, with a glory and dignity all its own." (Robinson) The idea is that one should let the men teach in church and let the women have the babies.
- d. **She will be saved in childbearing:** A better way to approach this passage is based on the grammar in the original Greek language. In the original, it says *she will be saved in the childbirth*. This has the sense, "Even though women were deceived, and fell into transgression starting with Eve, women can be saved by the Messiah - whom a woman brought into the world."
 - i. Probably, the idea here is that even though the "woman race" did something bad in the garden by being deceived and falling into transgression, the "woman race" also did something far greater, in being used by God to bring the saving Messiah into the world.
 - ii. The summary is this: Don't blame women for the fall of the human race; the Bible doesn't. Instead,

thank women for bringing the Messiah to us.

e. **Faith, love, and holiness, with self-control:** Most of all, we should note these positives. They are all qualities God wants to be evident in women, and that women have effectively nurtured in their children through generations.

Qualifications for Overseers

1Ti 3:1 Faithful is the Word: If anyone reaches out to overseership, he desires a good work.

1Ti 3:2 Then it behooves the overseer to be blameless, husband of one wife, temperate, sensible, well-ordered, hospitable, apt at teaching;

1Ti 3:3 not a drinker, not a contentious one, not greedy of ill gain, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not loving money;

1Ti 3:4 ruling his own house well, having children in subjection with all respect.

1Ti 3:5 But if anyone does not know to rule his own house, how will he care for a church of God?

1Ti 3:6 He should not be a novice, lest being puffed up he may fall into the Devil's judgment.

1Ti 3:7 But he must also have a good witness from those outside, that he not fall into reproach and into a snare of the Devil.

Qualifications for Deacons

1Ti 3:8 Likewise, deacons to be reverent, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy of ill gain,

1Ti 3:9 having the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience.

1Ti 3:10 And also let these be tested first, then let them serve, being without reproach.

1Ti 3:11 Likewise, their wives to be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things.

1Ti 3:12 Let deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling their own households and children well.

1Ti 3:13 For those having served well gain a good grade for themselves and much boldness in faith, those in Christ Jesus.

The Mystery of Godliness

1Ti 3:14 I write these things to you, hoping to come to you shortly.

1Ti 3:15 But if I delay, that you may know how to behave in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

1Ti 3:16 And confessedly, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in flesh, was justified in Spirit, was seen by angels, was proclaimed among nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.

1 Timothy 3:1-16

1 Timothy 3 - Qualifications for Leaders

A. Qualifications for a bishop.

1. (1) *Introduction the good work of spiritual leadership.*

This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.

a. **This is a faithful saying:** Paul has just written that women are not to hold positions of spiritual or doctrinal authority over congregations, but he did not want to leave the impression that just *any* man is qualified. No man is qualified to be a spiritual leader in the church just because of his gender.

b. **If a man desires the position of a bishop:** The office Paul described is that of **bishop**. Our religious culture has given us a particular idea of what a **bishop**

is; but the word **bishop** in New Testament Greek [episkopos] literally means “over” (*epi*) “watcher” (*skopos*) – an overseer.

- i. These were men with leadership and authority in the church. “The state has its *monarch*, the *Church* has its *bishop*; one should govern according to the *laws of the land*, the other according to the *word of God*” (Clarke).
- ii. In Act 20:17, we learn there were several *bishops* – that is, overseers – in one church in one city. Undoubtedly, these were men who had oversight over the many house-churches that met throughout the city.
- iii. Based on what **bishop** means, a bishop is someone with *oversight* in the church, a leader. Such a person may also sometimes be called an *elder* (*presbuteros*) or a *pastor* (*poimen*, which means “shepherd”), as in Act 20:17; Act 20:28.
- iv. “On the question as to the terms presbyter and episcopus, it is sufficient here to state my own conclusion, that they represent slightly different aspects of the same office, pastoral and official; aspects which came naturally into prominence in the Jewish and Greek societies respectively which gave birth to the names.” (White)
- v. Of this passage, White adds: “Having given elementary directions concerning the scope of public prayer, and the ministers thereof, St. Paul now takes up the matter of Church organization.” Yet this organization of the church is greatly limited. There is no advice or guidance on structure or exactly how the offices of **bishop** or deacon or anything else relate to each other. In the New Testament design, there

seems to be some flexibility on *structure* and an emphasis rather on the *character* of leaders.

c. **He desires a good work:** The idea isn't, "Good for you, you want to have a place of spiritual leadership," even though that can be a godly desire. The idea is more like this: "This is a good, noble, honorable work. Timothy, you need to look for good, noble, honorable men."

i. "For it is no light matter to represent God's Son in such a great task as erecting and extending God's kingdom, in caring for the salvation of souls whom the Lord Himself has deigned to purchase with His own blood, and ruling the Church which is God's inheritance." (Calvin)

d. **He desires a good work:** Spiritual leadership in the church isn't all about titles and honor and glory; it's about **work**. Jesus said: *If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all (Mar 9:35).*

i. "A *good work*, But a hard work. The ministry is not an idle man's occupation, but a sore labour." (Trapp)

ii. "What is the use of a lazy minister? He is no good either to the world, to the Church, or to himself. He is a dishonor to the noblest profession that can be bestowed upon the sons of men." (Spurgeon)

2. (2a) *Qualifications for bishops.*

A bishop then must be...

a. **A bishop then must be:** God has specific *qualifications* for leaders in the church. Leaders are not to be chosen at random, nor just because they volunteer, nor because they aspire to the position, nor even because they are "natural leaders." Instead they should be chosen primarily on how they match the qualifications listed here.

i. The qualifications for leadership have nothing to do with *giftedness*. God doesn't say, "Go out and get the most gifted men." God may easily and instantly create gifts in a man, because gifts are given by the Holy Spirit as He wills (1Co 12:11).

ii. Going to seminary doesn't make one qualified for spiritual leadership. Being a good talker doesn't make one qualified for spiritual leadership. Natural or spiritual gifts in themselves do not qualify one for spiritual leadership. What one gives in money or volunteer time does not qualify them for spiritual leadership. What qualifies a man for spiritual leadership is *godly character* - and godly character established according to these clear criteria.

b. **Then must be:** However, this is not a rigid list which demands *perfection* in all areas; they are both goals to reach for and general criteria for selection. When looking for church leaders, one should look at this list and ask:

- Does the man in question desire all these things with his whole heart?
- Does that desire show itself in his life?
- Are there others available who better fulfill the requirements of this list?

c. **Must be:** As well, these qualifications are valuable for every person, and not only those who aspire to leadership. They are clear indicators of godly character and spiritual maturity and they can give a true measure of a man.

3. (2b-7) A list of qualifications for leaders in the church.

Blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous;

one who rules his own house well, having *his* children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

a. **Blameless:** This word literally means, "Nothing to take hold upon." There must be nothing in his life that others can take hold of and attack the church.

i. "The word is a metaphor, taken from the case of an expert and skilful pugilist, who *so defends every part of his body* that it is impossible for his antagonist to give one hit." (Clarke)

ii. This is a broad term for a man who lives a righteous life that can be *seen* as righteous. No one can stand up and rightfully accuse the man of grievous sin.

iii. In 1Ti 3:10, in speaking about deacons, Paul used the phrase *being found blameless*. This implies being *blameless* is demonstrated by a track record of behavior.

b. **Husband of one wife:** The idea here is of "A one-woman man." It is not that a leader *must* be married (if so, then both Jesus and Paul could not be spiritual leaders in our churches). Nor is the idea that leader could never remarry if his wife had passed away or was Biblically divorced. The idea is that love and affection and heart is given to **one** woman, and that being his lawful and wedded wife.

i. This means that the Biblical leader is not a playboy, an adulterer, a flirt, and does not show romantic or

sexual interest in other women, including the depictions or images of women in pornography.

c. **Temperate**: The idea is of someone who is *not given to extremes*. They are reliable and trustworthy, and you don't have to worry about wide swings of vision, mood, or action.

d. **Soberminded**: This describes the person who is *able to think clearly and with clarity*. They are not constantly joking but know how to deal with serious subjects in a serious way.

i. "This does not mean he has no sense of humor, or that he is always solemn and somber. Rather it suggests that he knows the value of things and does not cheapen the ministry or the Gospel message by foolish behavior." (Wiersbe)

e. **Of good behavior**: The idea is "orderly." It is the same word translated *modest* in 1Ti 2:9. "Orderly, perhaps *dignified* in the best sense of the term" (White).

f. **Hospitable**: They are willing and able to open up their home to both friends and strangers.

g. **Able to teach**: This means they are skilled enough in the Bible to teach, either in a public or one-on-one setting.

h. **Not given to wine**: The idea is of not being addicted to wine or intoxicating drink. This verse, in itself, does not *prohibit* godly leadership from drinking alcoholic beverages, but it clearly discourages it.

i. "No ale-stake, tavern-haunter, that sits close at it, till the wine inflame him." (Trapp)

i. **Not violent**: This is a man who is not given to violence either publicly nor privately; a man who can let God fight his cause.

j. **Not greedy for money:** The King James Version puts it far more memorably: *not greedy of filthy lucre.*

i. "I repeat that the man who will not bear poverty patiently and willingly will inevitably become the victim of mean and sordid covetousness." (Calvin)

k. **Gentle:** The kind of man who takes Jesus as his example, not the latest action hero.

l. **Not quarrelsome:** The kind of person who is not always fighting over something or other.

m. **Not covetous:** This is a more encompassing thought than merely *greedy for money*. The **covetous** man is never satisfied with anything, always demanding something more or different. A man who is constantly *dissatisfied* is not fit for leadership among God's people.

n. **Who rules his own house well:** The godly leader demonstrates his leadership ability first in his own home; Paul recognized that it is in the home where our Christianity is first demonstrated.

i. It is true that a child may rebel from even a good home; but is the rebellion *because* of the parents or *in spite* of their job as parents? This is the question that must be asked.

o. **Not a novice:** New converts should not be given leadership too quickly. The leader should be well past the **novice** stage in their spiritual development.

i. **Novice** is literally "newly planted." When someone first comes to Jesus, it isn't good to put them into a place of leadership until they have been allowed to grow long enough to put down some deep roots.

ii. "Novices are not only bold and impetuous, but are puffed up with foolish self-confidence, as though they could fly beyond the clouds" (Calvin). Promoting a

novice too quickly gives occasion to the great sin - pride, in imitation of the Devil himself.

p. **A good testimony:** These characteristics must be evident to all, even unbelievers to see. The potential leader must be a good Christian *outside* the walls of the church.

B. Qualifications for deacons.

1. (8a) *Deacons, the practical servants of the church.*

Likewise deacons must be...

a. **Likewise deacons:** An example of the appointment of deacons is in Act 6:1-6, where the apostles saw the need to distribute the daily assistance to the widows among the church yet did not have the time to distribute the aid themselves. They chose men to act essentially as deacons in that church.

b. **Deacons must be:** Their qualifications are much the same as those for "bishops"; practical service (especially when recognized by an office) is leadership also.

i. It is a mistake to see one office as more prestigious than the other, though bishops have more responsibility before God. Each is more a matter of *calling* than status.

2. (8b-12) Qualifications for deacons.

Reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. Likewise their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

- a. **Reverent:** Showing proper respect towards both God and man.
- b. **Not double-tongued:** A man who speaks the truth the first time, with no intent to deceive.
- c. **Holding the mystery of the faith:** Those who can adhere to proper doctrine, out of sincere conviction.
- d. **First be proved:** A man *demonstrates* his fitness for office in the church by his conduct. Deacons and bishops are more *recognized* than *appointed*.
- e. **Likewise their wives:** It is difficult to know if Paul here referred here to female deacons (such as Phoebe, in Rom 16:1), or the wives of male deacons. The original wording will permit either possibility.
 - i. If he is speaking mainly of a male deacon's wife, it is appropriate because a man's leadership in the home can be evaluated, in part, by his wife's conduct. Is she **reverent, not [one of the] slanderers, temperate, and faithful in all things?**
 - ii. **Not slanderers:** "Literally, *not devils*. This may be properly enough translated *slanderers, backbiters, tale-bearers*, for all these are of their father, the devil, and his lusts they will do" (Clarke).

3. (13) *A promise for deacons.*

For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

- a. **For those who have served well as deacons:** God remembers their faithful service, even in tasks which some would consider menial. There is little doubt that you will see more **deacons** with a great reward than bishops or pastors.

b. **The faith which is in Christ Jesus:** All the work of servant-leaders in God's family is pointed towards building among God's people **the faith which is in Christ Jesus.**

C. The mystery of godliness.

1. (14-15) *Paul's reason for writing Timothy.*

These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

a. **These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly:** Paul desired to speak these things to Timothy personally, but knowing he might not be able to come as soon as he wished, Paul made certain that he said it in a letter.

i. "This verse makes it clear that Timothy's position was a temporary one; he was acting as St. Paul's representative at Ephesus." (White)

b. **How you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God:** Paul's purpose for writing was to give Timothy, as a leader, practical information on how to run things in the Ephesian church.

c. **The house of God:** The church must be, very consciously, the place where God is. This makes a church more attractive than anything else.

i. The Church is God's house because...

- He is the Architect.
- He is the Builder.
- He lives there.
- He provides for it.

- He is honored there, and He rules there.

d. **The church of the living God:** In the ancient Greek language, “**church**” was a non-religious word for a group of people called together for a purpose. The **living God** has called His people together for His purpose.

e. **The pillar and ground of truth:** The pillar and ground (foundation) of the church is **truth**. Tragically, many churches today don’t value the truth as they should and are therefore left weak pillars and shaky ground.

i. “The Church is the pillar of the truth because by its ministry the truth is preserved and spread... Paul will not acknowledge the Church except where God’s truth is exalted and plain.” (Calvin)

ii. It isn’t that the church is the foundation *for* the truth, but that the church *holds up* the truth so the world can see it. “Pillars also were of ancient use to fasten upon them any public edicts, which princes or courts would have published, and exposed to the view of all; hence the church is called, *the pillar and basis, or seal, of truth*, because by it the truths of God are published, supported, and defended” (Poole).

iii. “When the Church stands boldly out, and preaches the Word, it is the pillar of the truth; when it is hidden in the Roman catacombs, and cannot proclaim the Savior’s name to the world, still there lives the truth deep in the hearts of believers, and they are then the ground of the truth.” (Spurgeon)

2. (16) *An early hymn to express the foundation of Christian truth.*

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the

Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory.

- a. **Without controversy:** The wonderful summary of Christian truth in 1Ti 3:16 *should* be **without controversy** among believers. It is unfortunate when those who claim to be Christians debate or deny these fundamental truths.
 - i. "When he says 'without controversy,' I suppose he means that there ought to be no controversy about these facts, though controversies have arisen concerning them, and always will, since the most self-evident truth will always find self-evident fools to contradict it." (Spurgeon)
- b. **God was manifested in the flesh:** This is the essence of the incarnation; that God the Son, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, added to His deity humanity - and was thus **manifested in the flesh**.
 - i. "Observe that the comprehensive summary of the gospel here given is contained in six little sentences, which run with such regularity of measure in the original Greek, that some have supposed them to be an ancient hymn; and it is possible that they may have been used as such in the early church." (Spurgeon)
- c. **Justified in the Spirit:** We can say that Jesus was **justified by the Spirit** not in the sense that He was once sinful but made righteous, but in the sense that He was declared to be, by the Holy Spirit, what He always was - completely justified before the Father.
 - i. This declaration was made at His baptism (Mat 3:16), and at His resurrection (1Pe 3:18; Act 2:32-33).

d. **Seen by angels:** The ministry of Jesus, both on earth and through the Church, is of great interest to angelic beings. There were many instances when Jesus was seen by angels (Mar 1:13; Luk 22:41-43), and especially at the resurrection (Mat 28:2-7).

i. "The apostle mentions this to show the greatness of our religion, since the noblest intellects are interested in it. Did you ever hear of angels hovering around the assemblies of philosophical societies?" (Spurgeon)

ii. "The Godhead was seen in Christ by angels, as they had never seen it before. They had beheld the attribute of justice, they had seen the attribute of power, they had marked the attribute of wisdom, and seen the Prerogative of sovereignty; but never had angels seen love, and condescension, and tenderness, and pity, in God as they saw these things resplendent in the person and the life of Christ." (Spurgeon)

e. **Preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world:** Paul himself did his best to *fulfill* these statements. He was busy preaching Jesus among the Gentiles and bringing the world to belief.

i. "God's way of creating faith in men's hearts is not by pictures, music, or symbols, but by the hearing of the word of God. This may seem a strange thing, and strange let it seem, for it is a mystery, and a great mystery, but a fact beyond all controversy; for ever let the church maintain that Christ is to be preached unto the Gentiles." (Spurgeon)

f. **Received up in glory:** This reminds us of Jesus' ascension (Luk 24:51), His finished work on our behalf (Heb 1:3), and His present intercession for us (1Jn 2:1).

- i. "He was so received because his work is finished. He would never have gone into his glory if he had not finished all his toil. He would have accepted no reward had he not fully earned it." (Spurgeon)
- ii. **Received up in glory:** Jesus ascended into heaven in a resurrection body; yet it was a body that still retained the marks of His great work of love for us. It still had the nail prints in His hands and feet, the wound in his side, all marks of His suffering on our behalf (Joh 20:24-29).
- iii. Paul's description of Jesus after the passage speaking of Christian character reminds us of the key to our own character transformation - beholding Jesus. It is just as Paul wrote in 2Co 3:18 : *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*
- iv. Jesus is the perfect fulfillment of these descriptions of Christian character. We trust that Jesus will transform our life according to the same character, as we put our focus on Him. We sometimes want *religion* to build this character in us; but truly, *relationship* with Jesus is what really does it.

Some Will Depart from the Faith

1Ti 4:1 But the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, cleaving to deceiving spirits and teachings of demons,

1Ti 4:2 in lying speakers in hypocrisy, being seared in their own conscience,

1Ti 4:3 forbidding to marry, saying to abstain from foods, which God created for partaking with thanksgiving by the believers and those knowing the truth.

1Ti 4:4 Because every creature of God is good, and nothing to be thrust away, but having been received with thanksgiving;

1Ti 4:5 for through God's Word and prayerful intercourse, it is sanctified.

A Good Servant of Christ Jesus

1Ti 4:6 Having suggested these things to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, having been nourished by the words of faith, and by the good doctrine which you have followed.

1Ti 4:7 But refuse the profane and old-womanish tales. And exercise yourself to godliness.

1Ti 4:8 For bodily exercise is profitable to a little, but godliness is profitable to all things, having promise of the present life and of that coming.

1Ti 4:9 Faithful is the Word and worthy of all acceptance;

1Ti 4:10 for to this we also labor and are reproached, because we hope on the living God, who is deliverer of all men, especially of believers.

1Ti 4:11 Enjoin and teach these things.

1Ti 4:12 Let no one despise your youth, but become an example of the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

1Ti 4:13 Until I come, attend to reading, to exhortation, to teaching.

1Ti 4:14 Do not be neglectful of the gift in you, which was given to you through prophecy, with laying on of the hands of the elderhood.

1Ti 4:15 Give care to these things; be in these things in order that your progress may be plain in all.

1Ti 4:16 Give attention to yourself and to the doctrine; continue in them, for doing this, you will both deliver yourself and those hearing you.

1 Timothy 4:1-16

1 Timothy 4 – God’s Man of Truth and Integrity

A. False doctrine in the end times.

1. (1) A warning from the Holy Spirit.

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.

a. **Now the Spirit expressly says:** Paul especially marked this as a revelation from the Holy Spirit; either as a spontaneous word given as he wrote or quoting from a previous prophecy. Paul knew certain dangers would mark the **latter times**.

- The danger of *apostasy* (**some will depart**).
- The danger of *deception* (**deceiving spirits**).
- The danger of *false teaching* (**doctrines of demons**).

i. It has been more than 1900 years since Paul wrote to Timothy about **the latter times**, but he did not misunderstand his time or our own. History is not, and has not, been rushing towards a distant brink that would end this current order; even in apostolic times, history had reached that brink - and has run parallel to it since. As it turns out, the **latter times** describe a broad era, not a couple of years.

b. **Some will depart from the faith:** Because of the danger of the latter times, if Timothy were to remain a faithful minister to God’s people, he must keep a dead reckoning on the truth – **the faith**. If this were lost, not much else really mattered.

i. “A man may hold all the truths of Christianity, and yet render them of none effect by holding other

doctrines which counteract their influence; or he may apostatize by denying some essential doctrine, though he bring in nothing *heterodox*." (Clarke)

ii. A June 1997 article in U.S. News and World Report described a Virginia pastor who "Would rather preach on 'Bosnia, justice, or world peace' than on Bible stories or personal salvation." This is an example of a man who departed from the faith and followed his own direction.

c. **The faith:** This doesn't mean losing the ability to believe, but losing the content of what Christians should believe. It describes the essential teachings of the Christian faith. When **some... depart from the faith**, they are abandoning the essential teachings of Christianity.

i. The Bible uses the phrase "**the faith**" in this way many places: Act 6:7; Act 14:22, Col 1:23, 1Ti 1:19, and Jud 1:3.

d. **Deceiving spirits:** This refers to demonic spirits (angelic beings who have rebelled against God), who seek to deceive men and women and to entice them away from the truth.

i. Some lies are so powerful that they have an evident spiritual dynamic behind them. These are lies crafted and promoted by deceiving spirits.

e. **Doctrines of demons:** This speaks of the specific *teachings* of these **deceiving spirits**. Demons are theology majors, and have systems of doctrine.

i. We find the first demonic doctrine in Genesis 3. There Satan, speaking through a serpent, taught Eve: *You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God* (Gen 3:4-5). Since then, every

demonic doctrine has found its way back to this root: the idea that we can be gods, and operate independently from God.

ii. "Many MSS. and the chief of the fathers have... *spirits of deceit*; which is much more emphatic than the common reading. Deception has her spirits, emissaries of every kind, which she employs to darken the hearts and destroy the souls of men. Pretenders to *inspiration*, and false teachers of every kind, belong to this class." (Clarke)

f. **Deceiving spirits... doctrines of demons:** These have been around since man first walked the Garden of Eden. But we should expect that more and more people in the church would **depart from the faith** in the latter times and accept these false teachings.

i. It is hard to say if there is more false teaching today, or if it is merely a case of modern technology being able to spread the lie better. But the old saying is certainly true today: a lie travels at top speed while the truth goes on foot – and more people within the church are following these doctrines of demons.

2. (2-3) *The nature of their departure from the faith and embrace of the doctrines of demons.*

Speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

a. **Speaking lies in hypocrisy:** This describes those who depart from the faith. This certainly points to the ones who willingly embrace falsehood to justify their sin or pride; but it also refers to those who *claim* to teach

the Bible, while just using it to support their own ideas or agendas.

b. **Having their own conscience seared:** Their conscience, which at one time would have convicted them of their departure from the truth, now doesn't reply at all. It is as if the nerve endings of their conscience have been burnt over and are dead to feeling.

i. Paul here refers to the ancient practice of *branding* a criminal on the forehead with a distinguishing mark. For these, it was not their forehead that was branded with a hot iron, but their **conscience** instead.

ii. "They bear the marks of their hypocrisy as evidently and as indelibly in their conscience in the sight of God, as those who have been *cauterized* for their crimes do in their bodies in the sight of men." (Clarke)

iii. Paul knew what it was to have a dead, burned conscience. Before he surrendered his life to Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus, he felt completely justified in his persecution of Christians and hatred of Jesus. He could feel justified because his conscience was seared and needed a wake-up call – which the Lord graciously provided.

c. **Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods:** This describes the *legalistic teaching* of those who have departed from the faith. They taught that it was by following this list of man-made rules that one was justified in God's sight – that you would be more holy to God if you didn't marry, and if you did not eat certain foods.

i. There have always been those in the church who regard themselves as more spiritual than God Himself,

and have a stricter set of rules for living than God does.

ii. In the early centuries of the church, there were monks who went out to desolate desert places to show how spiritual they were by torturing themselves. One never ate cooked food. Another stood all night leaning on a sharp rock so that it was impossible for him to sleep. Another neglected his own body and allowed it to become so dirty that bugs dropped dead from his body. They did this because they thought it would win favor with God and show everyone how spiritual they were.

iii. We often think that if we sacrifice something for God (such as the right to marry or to eat certain foods), then He owes us something. This is legalism at its worst; trying to manipulate God into giving us something. The idea is that we can make God indebted to us, make Him our servant and make ourselves His master. In this we fulfill the original doctrine of demons – that we should be gods.

iv. Countless millions through the centuries have sought to sacrifice something, and make God owe them blessing, or forgiveness, or mercy, or whatever. That is the religion of self-flagellation; it is not the relationship with Jesus Christ described in the New Testament: *being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Rom 3:24)*.

v. "The controversy is not about flesh or fish, or about black or ashen colours, or about Wednesday or Friday, but about the mad superstitions of men who wish to obtain God's favour by such trifles and by contriving a carnal worship, invent for themselves an idol in God's place." (Calvin)

vi. **Forbidding to marry:** "They hold that it is far better for a priest to keep many whores than to have a wife." (Trapp)

3. (4-5) *A refutation of the legalism that marks those who have departed from the faith.*

For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

a. **For every creature of God is good:** Regarding what we eat, we can eat all things. We receive things rightly when we receive them with **thanksgiving**, with an abiding sense of gratitude towards God. We receive the blessings of food, shelter, and comfort as gifts, and not as rights.

b. **Nothing is to be refused:** We are not limited by any kind of diet; what we eat does not make us more righteous before God (though what we eat may affect our health).

i. This issue was settled once for all when God spoke to Peter in Act 10:9-16.

ii. "Both among the pagans, Jews, and Romanists, certain *meats* were prohibited; some *always*, others at *particular times*. This the apostle informs us was directly contrary to the original design of God; and says that those *who know the truth*, know this." (Clarke)

c. **It is sanctified by the word of God and prayer:** Paul here has in mind prayer before a meal. Notice that the emphasis is not on asking God to bless the food; but on thanking God for the blessing of providing food to eat.

i. The **word of God** sanctifies food in the sense that God gave two general commands to mankind to eat the good things of the earth.

- *And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food." (Gen 1:29)*
- *Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. (Gen 9:3)*

ii. It is good and proper for us to pray before eating a meal but it should not be done in a ritualistic, superstitious way. Nor should it be done to show others how spiritual we are – which is imitating the prayer practices of the Pharisees (Mat 6:5).

B. Instruction in ministry for Timothy.

1. (6) How to tell you are fulfilling your call.

If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.

a. **If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ:** Notice that the pastor's job is primarily *instruction* of the *brethren*. If the minister does not **instruct the brethren in these things**, then he isn't really a **good minister of Jesus Christ**.

i. It is also important to say that *instruction* should be understood in a broad sense, not only as classroom-style teaching or Sunday preaching. Jesus instructed His disciples, but with His presence, His life, and His practice as well as with His words.

b. **Nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed:** But, if Timothy will be a **good minister of Jesus Christ**, he

himself *must* remain anchored in God's word, carefully following **the good doctrine**.

2. (7-10) Keeping your priorities straight.

But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.

a. **Reject profane and old wives' fables:** The priority must be on God's Word, not on the words of man. Paul cautioned Timothy to keep focused on the Word, not on things that come from man. The greatest effort must be put into God's Word, not man's word.

b. **Reject profane and old wives' fables:** This is the *negative* aspect of the command. In the *positive* aspect, the priority must be kept on eternal things, not temporal things.

c. **Exercise yourself toward godliness:** Ancient Greek and Roman culture put a high value on physical exercise. Paul tells Timothy that the same work and commitment that others put towards physical exercise should be put toward the pursuit of **godliness**.

i. "Here is an intentional paradox. Timothy is to meet the spurious asceticism of the heretics by *exercising himself in the practical piety of the Christian life.*" (White)

ii. The word **godliness** comes from the old English word *Godlikeness*; it means to have the character and attitude of God. This was a worthy goal, much more

worthy that the potential attainments of physical exercise.

iii. **Bodily exercise profits a little** in that it has *some* value. Or, the idea can be translated *bodily exercise is good for a while*, while exercising unto godliness is good for all eternity.

iv. Spiritual development and physical development share some similarities. With each, growth only comes with *exertion* and *proper feeding*.

d. **Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is:** Paul here explains the value of godliness, both in the present sense and its eternal sense. Godliness makes **the life that now is** better, and we should not hesitate to believe it and to tell people this.

i. Though godliness does not make this life the most comfortable, or richest, or most pleasurable, or easiest in **the life that now is**, it undeniably makes it the *best*, the *most contented*, and the most *fulfilling* life one can live in this world.

ii. "I assure you, and there are thousands of my brethren who can affirm the same, that after having tried the ways of sin, we infinitely prefer the ways of righteousness for their own pleasure's sake even here, and we would not change with ungodly men even if we had to die like dogs. With all the sorrow and care which Christian life is supposed to bring, we would prefer it to any other form of life beneath the stars." (Spurgeon)

e. **And of that which is to come:** At the same time, **godliness** is the *only* guarantee of a **profitable** life **which is to come**. There are many pleasures or

achievements in this world that do not even pretend to offer anything for the life **which is to come**.

- i. Only godliness is the path to eternal life and happiness.
 - Sin and vice offer nothing for the life to come.
 - Genealogies and pedigrees offer nothing for the life to come.
 - Worldly success and wealth offer nothing for the life to come.
 - Personal fame or beauty offer nothing for the life to come.
 - Achievements in learning or the arts offer nothing for the life to come.
- ii. "Vice dares not say, it never has had the effrontery yet to say, 'Do evil and live in sin, and eternal life will come out of it.' No, the theater at its door does not proffer you eternal life, it invites you to the pit. The house of evil communications, the drunkard's bottle, the gathering-place of scorners, the chamber of the strange woman - none of these has yet dared to advertise a promise of eternal life as among the boons that may tempt its votaries. At best sin gives you but bubbles, and feeds you upon air. The pleasure vanishes, and the misery is left." (Spurgeon)

f. **We trust in the living God:** This is to be the great motto of the Christian life. Even as David challenged Goliath in the name of the living God (1Sa 17:26; 1Sa 17:36), so our **trust in the living God** empowers us to accomplish great things for His glory.

i. "But *our* God, in whom we trust, is a God with a great, warm, loving heart, a thinking God, an active God, a working, personal God, who comes into the

midst, of this world, and does not leave it to go on by itself. Although he is a stranger in the world, even as his people also are strangers and foreigners by reason of the revolt that men have made against their liege Lord and Sovereign, yet it is still his world, and he is still in it." (Spurgeon)

g. **The Savior of all men:** This emphasizes the idea that the priority must be kept on the message of Jesus Christ. It isn't that all men are saved in a Universalist sense; but that there is only one **Savior** for all men. It isn't as if Christians have one Savior and others might have another savior.

i. But notice Paul's point: **especially of those who believe.** Jesus' work is *adequate* to save all, but only *effective* in saving those who come to Him by faith.

ii. "What God intends for ALL, he actually gives to *them* that believe in Christ, who died for the sins of the world [1Jn 2:2], and tasted death for every man [Heb 2:9]. As *all* have been purchased by his blood so all may believe; and consequently all may be saved. Those that perish, perish through their own fault." (Clarke)

3. (11-16) Personal instructions.

These things command and teach. Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing

this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

- a. **These things command:** This has the note of authority. Timothy was not to enter the pulpit with speculations and opinions and theories of men. He was to fearlessly proclaim God's Word as a **command** and not give into the fear of man.
- b. **Let no one despise your youth:** Because Timothy was young, he was vulnerable to the errors of youth which bring the often justified criticism of those older. To address this, Paul called him to live a life that was so godly that no one could despise his youth.
 - i. The word **youth** in the ancient Greek was "Used of grown-up military age, extending to the 40th year" (Lock, cited in Earle). It seems that Timothy was about 30 years old at this time; but Paul was around 70, and youth is a relative thing.
 - ii. "St. Paul shows Timothy 'a more excellent way' than self-assertion for the keeping up of his dignity: Give no one any ground by any fault of character for despising thy youth." (White)
- c. **Be an example to the believers:** The King James Version has *be thou an example of the believers*. Some believe this is a more accurate translation, with the idea being that Timothy was to be the best representation possible of the Christian community.
 - i. "The rendering of the King James, *an example of believers* is better." (Hiebert)
 - ii. This meant that Timothy, and every godly servant of God, should be an example:
 - In what they say (**word**).
 - In what they do (**conduct**).

- In their **love**.
- In their attitude (**spirit**).
- In their **faith** (in the sense of *faithfulness*).
- In their **purity**.

iii. These are the criteria by which to assess a pastor. If he is smart, if he is funny, if he is cool, if he dresses well, if he is popular, or if he is any number of other things matter little. You must look for a pastor who is an example in **word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity**.

iv. "Thus we learn how foolish and ridiculous it is for people to complain that they receive no honour, when in fact there is nothing about them that is worth honouring, but rather they expose themselves to contempt by their ignorance, the example of their impure lives, their lightmindedness and other faults. The only way to win respect is by outstanding virtues which will protect us against contempt." (Calvin)

d. **Reading... exhortation... doctrine:** These are the things that Timothy must give attention to. Each of these things are centered on God's Word. He must **give attention** to these things in both his private life and in his public ministry.

e. **Do not neglect the gift that is in you:** Timothy was warned to not **neglect the gift** that God has given. This shows that there was definitely the *possibility* that gifts and abilities in him could be wasted for eternity. As with the parable of the talents, we should not bury what abilities God has given.

i. **Gift** is *charismatos* in the ancient Greek of the New Testament, and it refers to the varying spiritual gifts given to Timothy and to all believers. **Do not neglect the gift** has the idea that God gave Timothy

supernatural gifts, and he should trust that God will do great things through him – learning to flow with the moving and leading of the Holy Spirit.

ii. "God's gifts groan under our disuse or misuse." (Trapp)

f. **With the laying on of hands:** Paul may have in mind Timothy's ordination service, when church leaders laid hands on him and recognized God's call on his life to ministry. This was an event apparently accompanied by prophecy.

i. "It is evident that the elders of the church at Lystra and Derbe had met together with the apostle Paul when Timothy was about to launch out into full-time service and had laid their hands on him, commanding him to God in prayer." (Ironside)

g. **Meditate on these things:** Paul called Timothy to *meditation* on God's Word and the work of God in his life. This is not emptying our minds (the goal of Eastern meditation), but *filling* our minds with God's Word and truth.

h. **Give yourself entirely to them:** Timothy was encouraged to give it his all, to put forth a maximum effort, and by doing so, his **progress** would **be evident to all**. Often, progress is not evident because we do not give ourselves entirely to the pursuit of God and His will.

i. Often we fall short of all we can be for God because we are *passive* in our Christian life; we simply do not give ourselves entirely. Jesus warned against this passive attitude in the parable of the talents, where the servant who did nothing was severely rebuked.

ii. Paul could say, in 1Co 15:10 : *But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they*

all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Paul knew spiritual growth didn't just happen; it is the gift of God, but bestowed on those who actively pursue it.

iii. As Alan Redpath observed that a Christian might have a saved soul but a wasted life – but no follower of Jesus should ever be content with such a place.

iv. At the same time, we are careful to remember that giving our entire effort never *earns* the blessing or favor of God. Our hard work and heart work never puts God in the place where He owes us something. We give our entire effort out of gratitude and in honor to the God who has already done so much for us.

i. **Take heed:** Timothy, and every pastor, must examine constantly the two great areas of concern – one's **life** and one's **doctrine**. Failing to do this would mean danger for both Timothy himself and for those in his congregation.

i. Without giving heed to his **life**, Timothy might suffer shipwreck (as in 1Ti 1:19). Without giving heed to his **doctrine**, Timothy might lead others astray or leave them short of God's salvation.

ii. Those who **hear** Timothy as a pastor should be hearing **doctrine**. Timothy's primary call was not to entertain, amuse, or even help with practical things – it was to present Biblical doctrine, and to give heed to that doctrine.

j. **Save both yourself and those who hear you:** The benefit from taking heed to one's life and doctrine is remarkable. It is an assurance to the servant of God that they will also be saved, and many of **those who hear** them. Taken in the opposite, we see that the cost of failing to **take heed** to one's **life and doctrine** is high.

The one who fails to **take heed** should feel no great assurance for either their own life or the lives of those who hear them.

- i. "And just as the unfaithfulness or negligence of a pastor is fatal to the Church, so it is right for its salvation to be ascribed to his faithfulness and diligence. It is indeed true that it is God alone who saves and not even the smallest part of His glory can rightly be transferred to men. But God's glory is in no way diminished by His using the labour of men in bestowing salvation." (Calvin)
- ii. "What a high honour is this to faithful ministers, that they should be styled saviours in a sense!" (Trapp)
- iii. "For just as the salvation of his flock is a pastor's crown, so all that perish will be required at the hand of careless pastors." (Calvin)
- iv. "Years ago Hamburgh was nearly half of it burned down, and among the incidents that happened, there was this one. A large house had connected with it a yard in which there was a great black dog, and this black dog in the middle of the night barked and howled most furiously. It was only by his barking that the family were awakened just in time to escape from the flames, and their lives were spared; but the poor dog was chained to his kennel, and though he barked and thus saved the lives of others, he was burned himself. Oh! Do not you who work for God in this church perish in that fashion. Do not permit your sins to enchain you, so that while you warn others you become lost yourselves." (Spurgeon)

Instructions for the Church

1Ti 5:1 Do not sharply rebuke an elder, but exhort as a father; and younger ones as brothers,

1Ti 5:2 older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.

1Ti 5:3 Honor widows, the ones really being widows.

1Ti 5:4 But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them learn first to be godly to their own house and to make a return payment to their forebears, for this is good and pleasing before God.

1Ti 5:5 But honor the one being really a widow, even having been left alone, who has set her hope on God and continues in petitions and prayers night and day.

1Ti 5:6 But she who lives in self-pleasure has died while living.

1Ti 5:7 And enjoin these things that they may be blameless.

1Ti 5:8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially his family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

1Ti 5:9 Let a widow be enrolled having become not less than sixty years, the wife of one man,

1Ti 5:10 being witnessed by good works, if she brought up children, if she hosted strangers, if she washed the feet of the saints, if she relieved afflicted ones, if she followed after every good work.

1Ti 5:11 But refuse younger widows; for whenever they grow lustful against Christ, they desire to marry,

1Ti 5:12 having guilt because they set aside the first faith;

1Ti 5:13 and with it all, they also learn to be idle, going around the houses, and not only idle, but also gossips and busybodies, speaking the things not proper.

1Ti 5:14 Therefore, I desire the young women to marry, to bear children, to rule the house, giving no occasion to the adversary on account of reproach.

1Ti 5:15 For some already have turned aside behind Satan.

1Ti 5:16 If any believing man or believing woman has widows, let them relieve them , and do not burden the church, that it may relieve those being really widows.

1Ti 5:17 Let the elders who take the lead well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those laboring in word and teaching.

1Ti 5:18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox treading out grain," and, the laborer is worthy of his pay.
Deut. 25:4

1Ti 5:19 Do not receive an accusation against an elder unless on " the testimony of " "two or three witnesses."
Deut. 19:15

1Ti 5:20 The ones sinning before all, rebuke, that the rest also may have fear.

1Ti 5:21 I solemnly witness before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels, that you should guard these things without prejudice, doing nothing by way of partiality.

1Ti 5:22 Lay hands quickly on no one, nor share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.

1Ti 5:23 No longer drink water, but use a little wine on account of your stomach and your frequent infirmities.

1Ti 5:24 The sins of some men are plain before, going before to judgment, but indeed some follow after.

1Ti 5:25 Likewise, also the good works are plain beforehand, and those otherwise cannot be hidden.

1 Timothy 5:1-25

1 Timothy 5 - How to Treat People in the Church

A. A summary of how to treat all people in the church.

1. (1) How to treat the men in the church.

Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort *him* as a father, younger men as brothers.

a. **Do not rebuke an older man:** Paul directed Timothy that **older** men are generally not to be rebuked. A young pastor such as Timothy must shepherd them faithfully, but with due respect for the years and presumed wisdom of the **older** men.

i. Any godly person will show a deference to those who are aged. *You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the LORD (Lev 19:32). The silver-haired head is a crown of glory, if it is found in the way of righteousness (Pro 16:31).*

ii. There is another reason to exhort rather than rebuke an older man: he may simply not receive a rebuke.

b. **Do not rebuke:** The ancient Greek verb for **rebuke** is not the normal word for “rebuke” in the New Testament. This is the only place this word is used, and it means literally “to strike at.” Timothy was told to not attack older men with words, but to treat them with respect – as he would treat the younger men with respect as brothers.

i. The command was not that Timothy must never rebuke older men, but that he was not to strike at people with an overly harsh rebuke.

ii. Apart from this particularly severe word, in general *rebuke* is an important duty of a pastor. It is the simple, clear, presentation that someone is wrong, either in their conduct or thinking. Its main goal is not encouragement as much as to clearly confront someone with their wrong behavior or thinking. In another letter to a pastor, Paul made the importance

of rebuking clear: *Rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you* (*Tit 2:15*).

iii. In *1Ti 5:20* – this very chapter – Timothy was told there are times are when not only an elder should be rebuked, but times when he should be rebuked publicly. Therefore, in this verse Timothy was not told to never rebuke, rather he was told to never rebuke in a harsh, attacking manner.

iv. The problem is that many people amass all their defensive ability at a rebuke – if not at the time, then later, after having time to think and listen to their pride. Some become experts at criticizing the one who brought the rebuke, and consider their hurt feelings more important than the truth of the rebuke.

v. No one likes to be rebuked; but the wise person uses the rebuke as a valuable means to growth. Spurgeon said, “A sensible friend who will unsparingly criticize you from week to week will be a far greater blessing to you than a thousand undiscriminating admirers if you have sense enough to bear his treatment, and grace enough to be thankful for it” (*Lectures to My Students*).

c. **But exhort him as a father:** Exhortation is encouragement to do what needs to be done. It has the manner of an encouraging coach or trainer, helping the athlete to achieve their best.

d. **Younger men:** These were to be treated as **brothers**; that is, as partners and friends in the work of the gospel, but without the same deference due to older men.

2. (2) *How to treat women in the church.*

Older women as mothers, younger as sisters, with all purity.

- a. **Older women:** These were to be treated as **mothers**, with the respect and honor due their age. A young pastor must accept – and appreciate – some amount of mothering from some of the **older women** in the church, and it is proper to give them honor as such.
- b. **The younger:** These younger women were to be treated **as sisters**; Timothy, as any godly man, was to always make certain his conduct towards younger women was always pure and above reproach. A godly man is not flirtatious or provocative and does not use double entendre' (witty words that can be taken in a flirtatious or provocative way).

B. How to treat widows and those in need.

1. (3) *The general principle: help the needy who are truly in need.*

Honor widows who are really widows.

a. **Honor widows:** In the days the New Testament was written, there was no social assistance system from the government. In that day there was one especially vulnerable class: elderly widows, who were usually without support from husbands or grown children, and without means to adequately support themselves. These are those **who are really widows**.

i. "One meaning of the word *to honour*, is *support, sustain*; and here it is most obviously to be taken in this sense." (Clarke)

ii. The principles revealed here are extremely relevant today, when many look to the local congregation as a place where the poor and needy should be able to come for financial help.

iii. Most any pastor can give you many stories about strangers who contact the church and ask for some kind of assistance – and pastors can tell you how hard

it is to deal with such situations with love, but without being taken advantage of. The writer has had several experiences with the kind of men who call from a hotel with the big, sad story, pleading for money in the name of Christian love. Upon arrival, the room was usually a mess, the television turned to filth, and evidence of phone calls to churches called all around town, looking for pastors to tell the sad story. When asked to describe his favorite Bible verse, almost always the man would be confused and unable to answer. Upon many other occasions when helping those who are in need, the needy were asked to have their home church pastor call with a word of thanks – and it never happened.

b. **Who are really widows:** Those who were **really widows** were to receive **honor** – which in this context means financial support yet given in a dignified and honorable way.

2. (4-6) *How to tell those who are really widows.*

But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God. Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day. But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives.

a. **If any widow has children:** Those who should be legitimately helped by the church should not have family who can assist them. If they do have family to assist them, it is the responsibility of the family to do it.

i. This passage describes a “real” widow as one who is **left alone**; she has no one else to support her. “This shows that *widows indeed* are those that have *neither*

children nor nephews, no relatives that either will or can help them, or no near relatives alive" (Clarke).

ii. **Let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents** reminds us of the ongoing responsibility adult children have towards their parents and grandparents.

iii. "The Christian who falls below the best heathen standard of family affection is the more blameworthy, since he has, what the heathen has not, the supreme example of love in Jesus Christ." (White)

b. **Trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day:** Those who should be legitimately helped by the church should serve the church in some way. In this case, the widows would be given the job of praying for the church.

c. **But she who lives in pleasure:** Those who should be legitimately helped by the church must have godly lives. It is appropriate to say, "You're not living a godly life, so you won't receive financial assistance from the church."

i. "It does not indicate *grossly criminal pleasures*; but simply means one who indulges herself in *good eating and drinking*, pampering her body at the expense of her mind." (Clarke)

ii. **Is dead while she lives:** The life lived for mere pleasure and ease is no life at all. It is a living death, whether lived by a young widow or anyone else.

iii. Many who come to the church for assistance are in need because they have lived their lives for the pleasures of alcohol, drugs, or whatever; now they are in need and they want the church to help. It's legitimate to say, "No; you have lived **in pleasure**

and now suffer the consequences. The resources of this congregation are not for your help in this case."

3. (7-8) *Where provision should come from.*

And these things command, that they may be blameless. But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

- a. **These things command:** A good pastor will teach these things, so all will know what God expects of them.
- b. **If anyone does not provide for his own:** God's normal way of providing for the needy is not through the local congregation, but through our own hard work.
- c. **He has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever:** In the strongest terms, Paul emphasized the responsibility of a man to provide for his family – to do all he could to support them.
 - i. This is the *minimum* required of a Christian man; if he does not do even this, his conduct is worse than an unbeliever's.
 - ii. "We may add that Jesus Himself gave an example of providing for one's own, when He provided a home for His mother with the beloved disciple." (White)
 - iii. This is why when someone is out of work, we can pray with such confidence, *knowing* it is God's will for them to provide for the needs of their family through work.

4. (9-10) *Helping older widows.*

Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, and not unless she has been the wife of one man, well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved

the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work.

- a. **Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number:** The idea is that if someone is under sixty, they could still support themselves or get remarried. They did not need to be added to the support list of the church.
- b. **Well reported for good works... if she has diligently followed every good work:** Those widows who were accepted into the support of the church must not only be true widows, but they must also have godly character. They were called to a job, not merely to a handout.
 - i. When Paul says that they she should have **brought up children**, he probably has in mind both the raising of one's own children, and the receiving of abandoned infants (which were all too common in the ancient world). "The words *brought up* may refer to the children of others, who were educated in the Christian faith by pious Christian women" (Clarke).

5. (11-16) Helping younger widows.

But refuse the younger widows; for when they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry, having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith. And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not. Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some have already turned aside after Satan. If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the

church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows.

a. **Refuse the younger widows:** As a general rule, these were not to be added to the support roll of the local congregation, because they generally could provide for themselves and could remarry.

i. Adam Clarke on the idea of “**grow wanton**”: “The word is supposed to be derived from *to remove* and *the rein*; and is a metaphor taken from a pampered horse, from whose mouth the rein has been removed, so that there is nothing to check or confine him. The metaphor is plain enough, and the application easy.”

b. **They desire to marry, having condemnation:** Paul did not condemn young widows for wanting to get married, only observing that many unmarried women are so hungry for marriage and companionship that they don’t conduct themselves in a godly way in regard to relationships.

i. Many people get into a bad romance or spoil a friendship, because they are desperately needy for relationship. It’s a common occurrence that Paul warned against.

ii. One doesn’t have to be a young widow to fulfill the description of **they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not.** Those who spend much time talking about other people’s lives need to get a life of their own. “It is no sin in any case to marry, bear children, and take care of a family; but it is a sin in every case to be idle persons, gadders about, tattlers, busybodies, sifting out and detailing family secrets” (Clarke).

iii. Paul did not condemn a young widow's desire for romantic companionship; but he insisted that it be pursued and expressed in the purity that should mark all believers.

c. **If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them:** Paul concluded with a principle he alluded to three times in this section (1Ti 5:4-5; 1Ti 5:8). The first responsibility for support is at the home; the local church is to support the truly destitute who are godly.

C. How to treat elders.

1. (17-18) *Elders are to be honored according to principles from Scripture.*

Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages."

a. **Elders:** The word here is to be understood in a broad sense of those in leadership. The focus is on elders **who rule** and elders who teach (**labor in the word and doctrine**). Not necessarily will every elder who *rules* will also be an elder who *teaches*.

b. **Be counted worthy of double honor:** If an elder (such as a pastor) does **rule well** and does **labor in the word and doctrine** (clearly speaking of *hard work*), that one is worthy of **double honor**.

i. In this context, **double honor** means financial support. Paul already stated that certain widows were worthy of *honor* (1Ti 5:3), speaking of financial support. Now he added, **let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and**

doctrine. Some think the church should not support pastors and staff, and that the paid ministry is an abomination – they say that the church instead should be using the money to support the needy. This is an attractive way of thinking; but it isn't Biblical. If the needy (that is, the *truly* needy) are worthy of honor, then those who properly rule and teach in the church are worthy of **double honor**.

ii. "Almost every critic of note allows that *timee* here signifies *reward, stipend, wages*. Let him have a double or a larger salary who rules well." (Clarke)

iii. White paraphrased Paul's idea: "What I have been saying about the support of widows reminds me of another question of Church finance: the payment of presbyters. Equity and scriptural principles suggest that they should be remunerated in proportion to their usefulness."

c. **For the Scripture says:** The principle that those who serve God's people should be paid (when possible, of course) is supported by the passages of **Scripture** quoted by Paul: Deu 25:4 and Luk 10:7.

i. Paul explained in 1Co 9:11 that if one sows spiritual things (such as **labor in the word and doctrine**), it is entirely appropriate for them to reap material things among those who they do the spiritual work. In Gal 6:6 Paul wrote, *let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches*. In Php 4:17 Paul said that such giving abounds to the account of the giver, sharing in the reward of the spiritual ministry supported.

ii. It is also significant that Paul quoted Luke and called it **Scripture**, just as much as the passage from the Hebrew Scriptures that he referenced.

2. (19-20) How to treat a leader accused of sin.

Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.

a. **Do not receive:** In these verses, Paul hit the balance between believing and acting on every bit of gossip that comes along about a leader in the church, and ignoring serious sin in a leader's life. Either extreme is wrong.

i. "Nothing does more harm than when some people are treated as if they could do no wrong and others as if they could do no right." (Barclay)

ii. "The reason of this difference is evident: those whose business it is to correct others will usually have many enemies; great caution, therefore, should be used in admitting accusations against such persons." (Clarke)

b. **Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses:** Any accusation against a leader should not be automatically received. The accusation should be carefully verified by **two or three witnesses** – not just two or three others who also heard the gossip. Timothy should not **receive** or promote unsubstantiated accusations about church leaders.

i. In his commentary on 1 Timothy, John Calvin explained some reasons why people are so quick to **receive an accusation** against a pastor when perhaps they should not: "The more sincerely any pastor strives to further Christ's kingdom, the more he is loaded with spite, the more fierce do the attacks upon him become. And not only so, but as soon as any charge is made against ministers of the Word, it

is believed as surely and firmly as if it had been already proved. This happens not only because a higher standard of integrity is required from them, but because Satan makes most people, in fact nearly everyone, over credulous so that without investigation, they eagerly condemn their pastors whose good name they ought to be defending."

ii. Calvin pointed out there is a spiritual attack in all of this: "It is indeed a trick of Satan to estrange men from their ministers so as gradually to bring their teaching into contempt. In this way not only is wrong done to innocent people whose reputation is undeservedly injured, but the authority of God's holy teaching is diminished."

iii. There is an old story about a pastor who was trying to defend himself against criticism. He said, "There's a story going about that I told my wife not to go to a certain church that has wild meetings. They say my wife went anyway, and I dragged her out of the church by her hair, and I hurt her so badly she had to go to the hospital. Let me respond to these accusations. First of all, I never told her to stay away from that church. Second, I didn't drag her out by her hair. Third, she never had to go to the hospital. Lastly, I've never been married so I don't have a wife."

iv. Spurgeon advised in *Lectures to My Students* that when people come to a pastor with gossip, he should say, "Well, all this is very important, and I need to give it my full attention – but my memory isn't so good and I have a lot to think about. Can you write it all down for me?" Spurgeon says this will take care of it, because they won't want to write down their gossip.

c. **Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest may fear:** However, if leaders are in sin, it must be addressed forthrightly - with public rebuke, to promote a fear of sin among the leadership and the entire church.

- i. Many congregations have had great trouble because sin in the leadership was not forthrightly dealt with. It's important that everyone understand that leadership in the church does not shield one from accountability; it makes one even more accountable.
- ii. According to John Calvin, in the Middle Ages the church protected its corrupt bishops against accusation by demanding that 72 witnesses be brought forth to confirm any accusation against a bishop. This is an extreme example of corrupt leaders protecting other corrupt leaders.

3. (21) *Do not be prejudiced or show partiality.*

I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality.

a. **I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels:** This strong statement reflects the serious nature of the job of leaders in the local congregation. They serve an eternal God and must please Him first in everything they do.

- i. "We are safe in saying that *the elect angels* are identical with 'the angels which kept their own principality' (Jud 1:6), 'that did not sin' (2Pe 2:4)."
(White)
- ii. "He adds to Christ the angels, not that they are judges, but as future witnesses of carelessness or rashness or self-seeking or bad faith. They are

present as spectators, for they have been given charge to care for the Church." (Calvin)

iii. "And indeed the man who is not shaken out of his carelessness and laziness by the thought that the government of the Church is conducted under the eye of God and His angels must be worse than stupid, and have his heart harder than stone." (Calvin)

b. **Observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality:** Prejudice and partiality are grave sins before God. In the New Testament, the emphasis is on **partiality** according to class (Jas 2:1-9); but partiality according to race and gender is also included (Gal 3:26-29) and regarded as sin.

i. "Do not treat any man, in religious matters, according to the rank he holds in life, or according to any personal attachment thou mayest have for him. Every man should be dealt with in the church as he will be dealt with at the judgment-seat of Christ." (Clarke)

D. How to treat potential leaders in the church.

1. (22) *Be careful about approving the ministry of another person.*

Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.

a. **Lay hands on anyone:** This is used in the sense of ordination. Paul cautioned Timothy to let a man prove himself before he was recognized in ministry. There should not be a rush; time must season a man and his ministry.

i. Some think the admonition **do not lay hands on anyone hastily** has to do with receiving repentant people back into the fellowship of the church. It seems that in some early church circles, those who

had fallen into scandalous sin had to be received back into the church with the laying on of hands and prayer by church leaders. If so, Paul meant, "Don't go too fast. Let them demonstrate their repentance first."

b. **Lay hands on:** Since ordination simply recognizes God's calling, it is all the more reason to not be in a hurry – time should be given to allow those gifts and callings to demonstrate themselves.

i. It isn't uncommon for a young man in the ministry to be a bit impatient; he wants to do great things for the Lord and is anxious for pastors and elders to **lay hands** on them in recognition of God's work in them.

ii. Yet, there is danger if anyone *waits* to give themselves fully to serving the Lord until they are recognized with a title or the laying on of hands. This means they are more concerned with *image* (how it appears to others) than with *substance* (what they can really be doing for the Lord right now).

c. **Keep yourself pure:** This connects to an important idea. If Timothy was called to observe and assess the lives of others, it was important that he pay even more attention to his own life.

i. "The intention of the warning would be that Timothy would best avoid clerical scandals by being cautious at the outset as to the character of those whom he ordains." (White)

ii. **Nor share in other people's sins:** We all have enough sin of our own; we do not need to add to it by partaking in the sins of others. There are many ways we can do this.

- We can share in the sins of others by setting a bad example before them.

- We can share in the sins of others by approving of them or ignoring them.
- We can share in the sins of others by joining a church that spreads dangerous teachings.

2. (23) *Paul's medical advice to Timothy.*

No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities.

- a. **Use a little wine for your stomach's sake:** Water in the ancient world was often impure and Timothy probably had problems from the impure water. Since the fermentation process would eliminate some of the harmful things in the water, it would be better for him to drink **a little wine** rather than water all the time.
- b. **Use a little wine:** Timothy was probably abstaining from alcohol for the sake of setting a good example. However, this abstinence was hurting his health – wine was safer to drink than water. So, Paul told Timothy that it wasn't wise to sacrifice his health for the sake of this abstinence – he would do more good for the Jesus and His kingdom by taking care of his body in this circumstance.
 - i. "Paul is simply saying that there is no good in an asceticism which does the body more harm than good." (Barclay)
- c. **Your frequent infirmities:** Timothy was the victim of **frequent infirmities**; yet Paul did not simply command a healing on apostolic authority, or even send him a handkerchief with healing power (Act 19:11-12). This demonstrates that Paul did not have miraculous powers at his own command, but only at the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Apparently, there was no such prompting in Timothy's case.

i. If it is God's will for all to be healed *right now*, then Paul (and the Holy Spirit who inspired him) here led Timothy into sin – calling him to look to a natural remedy instead of a divine healing. God uses natural remedies and the work of doctors in healing, as well as the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit – they don't contradict one another.

3. (24-25) *The difficulty in looking at a man's sin and his good works.*

Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later. Likewise, the good works of some are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden.

a. **Some men's sins are clearly evident... but those of some men follow later:** It is easy to see the struggles and sins some have; but with some others, the sins are hidden.

i. We all have areas of our lives God is dealing with; and sometimes the area is something clearly evident to others. But sometimes the sinful area is not evident; some people are regarded as holy just because they are good at hiding their sin.

b. **Otherwise cannot be hidden:** Good works are always eventually revealed; but sins are sometimes hidden and will be evident only at the judgment. These words are meant to be a caution to Timothy in his appointing of leaders. Sometimes what one sees on the outside isn't really an accurate picture, so we need to take it slow, so we can wait on God for discernment.

1Ti 6:1 Let as many as are slaves under a yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name and teaching of God may not be blasphemed.

False Teachers and True Contentment

1Ti 6:2 And those having believing masters, let them not despise them , because they are brothers, but rather let them serve as slaves, because they are believing and beloved ones, those receiving of the good service in return. Teach and exhort these things.

1Ti 6:3 If anyone teaches differently, and does not consent to sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ and the doctrine according to godliness,

1Ti 6:4 he has been puffed up, understanding nothing, but is sick concerning doubts and arguments, out of which comes envy, strife, evil-speakings, evil suspicions,

1Ti 6:5 meddling, of men whose mind has been corrupted and deprived of the truth, supposing gain to be godliness. Withdraw from such persons .

1Ti 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

1Ti 6:7 For we have brought nothing into the world, and it is plain that neither can we carry anything out.

1Ti 6:8 But having food and clothing, we will be satisfied with these.

1Ti 6:9 But those having purposed to be rich fall into temptation, and a snare, and many foolish and hurtful lusts, which plunge men into destruction and loss.

1Ti 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all evils, by means of which some having lusted after it were seduced from the faith, and they themselves pierced through by many pains.

Fight the Good Fight of Faith

1Ti 6:11 But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness.

1Ti 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith. Lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and confessed the good confession before many witnesses.

1Ti 6:13 I charge you before God, He making all things alive, and Christ Jesus, He witnessing the good confession to Pontius Pilate,

1Ti 6:14 that you keep the commandment spotless, blameless, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,

1Ti 6:15 who in His own time will reveal the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords,

1Ti 6:16 the only One having immortality, living in light that cannot be approached, whom no one of men saw, nor can see; to whom be honor and everlasting might. Amen.

1Ti 6:17 Charge the rich in the present age not to be high-minded, nor to set hope on the uncertainty of riches, but in the living God, He offering to us richly all things for enjoyment;

1Ti 6:18 to do good, to be rich in good works, to be ready to share, generous,

1Ti 6:19 treasuring up for themselves a good foundation for the coming age , that they may lay hold on everlasting life.

1Ti 6:20 O Timothy, guard the Deposit, having turned away from the profane empty babblings and opposing theories of the falsely named knowledge,

1Ti 6:21 which some having asserted have missed the mark concerning the faith. Grace be with you. Amen.

1 Timothy 6:1-21

1 Timothy 6 - Riches and Godliness

A. A word to servants.

1. (1) A word to slaves in general.

Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed.

a. **Let as many bondservants:** Paul called upon slaves to **count their own masters worthy of all honor** - to be good, respectful workers for their masters. He did this not out of a general approval of the institution of slavery, but so that God would be glorified (**so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed**).

i. Christianity arose in a social setting where slavery was commonplace. There were some 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire. Some slaves held privileged positions; other slaves were treated with great abuse. While the Bible never commanded slavery, it did permit it and regulate it.

ii. Jesus, Paul and others in the New Testament did not call for a violent revolution against the institution of slavery (which perhaps, humanly speaking, might have failed miserably). Yet through the transformation brought by the gospel, they did effectively destroy the foundations of slavery – racism, greed, class hatred – and made a civilization without slavery possible.

iii. The church itself was a place where slavery was destroyed. It was not uncommon for a master and a slave to go to church together, where the slave would be an elder in the church, and the master was expected to submit to the slave's spiritual leadership! Such radical thinking was an offense to many, but glorified God and eventually destroyed slavery.

b. **As are under the yoke:** These same principles apply to our occupations today. When we work hard and honor our employers, it glorifies God. But when we are bad workers and disrespectful to our supervisors, it brings shame on the name of Jesus Christ.

i. Col 3:22-24 gives the sense of this: *Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not*

with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. No matter who we work for, we really work for the Lord - and we should give the Lord both honor and a hard day of work.

- c. **So that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed:** People will judge Christianity – who God is (**the name of God**) and what the Bible teaches (**and His doctrine**) – based on how believers conduct themselves as workers.
 - i. Each Christian should ask if they are leading people to Jesus by how they work, or if they are leading people away from Jesus by their bad work and testimony at their job.

2. (2) *A special word to slaves with Christian masters.*

And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.

- a. **And those who have believing masters:** Perhaps it was easy for a slave to say, "My master doesn't know Jesus. That's why he expects me to work so hard." But if the master were a Christian, or became a Christian, the slave might think, "My brother shouldn't expect me to work so hard now; he will show me Christian love, and perhaps favor me above the other slaves, because I am a Christian also."

- b. **Let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them:** We can almost imagine a slave saying, "My master is my brother! We

are equal before the Lord. He has no right to tell me what to do." This attitude ignores the fact that God calls us into many relationships where submission is commanded - in the home, in the church, in the workplace. Our equality in Jesus doesn't eliminate God's order of authority.

c. **But rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved:** Upon this principle, Christian slaves with Christian masters were not free to despise their masters for expecting them to work, and to work hard. Rather, the slave should be even more dedicated to work because he served a brother.

- i. We should never expect special treatment because our boss or supervisor is a Christian. Instead, that should motivate us to work all the harder, because we can then be a blessing to another brother.
- ii. Warren Wiersbe relates the story of a young lady who had left a secular job to work for a Christian organization. She had been there about a month and was really disillusioned. "I thought it was going to be heaven on earth," she complained. "Instead, there are nothing but problems." Wiersbe asked her if she was working just as hard for her new boss as she did in the secular job. The look on her face said, "No!" So, Wiersbe told her, "Try working harder, and show your boss real respect. Just because all of you in the office are saved doesn't mean you can do less than your best." She took his advice and the problems cleared up.

d. **Teach and exhort these things:** This teaching was especially important in the ancient world, where slaves might be treated very differently from master to master, and where there was sometimes intense racism and hatred between slaves and masters.

B. Money, contentment and godliness.

1. (3-5) Warning against those who misuse God's word.

If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.

a. **If anyone teaches otherwise:** In drawing to the close of the letter, Paul referred again to a theme he mentioned in the first chapter – that Timothy must be on guard against those who would misuse the word of God.

i. **Teaches otherwise** in this context may mean replacing the plain teaching of God's word with a focus on prophecies and visions and strange spiritual experiences people claim. This was a great danger that Paul warned Timothy against.

ii. Poole on **if anyone teaches otherwise**: "If there be any person who either more publicly or more privately shall take upon him to instruct people otherwise." Some of the most dangerous teaching in the church isn't done from a pulpit, but in informal, private conversations.

b. **And does not consent to wholesome words:** Paul warned Timothy against the argumentative heretic, who has left the word of God to promote his own ideas – who **does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ.** He warned Timothy

against those who seemed to treat the Word of God more as a plaything instead of as a precious gift.

- i. You don't have to be an active opponent of God's word to be an enemy of it. If we fail to give the Bible its rightful place in our life and in our preaching, we oppose God's word.
- ii. "It is possible not to profess any ungodly or manifest error and yet to corrupt the doctrine of godliness by silly boastful babbling. For when there is no progress or edification from any teaching, it has already departed from the institution of Christ." (Calvin)

c. **Even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ:** This might seem like an unnecessary warning against an obvious danger. Yet the warning was necessary, because those who misuse God's truth don't advertise themselves that way. They often claim to honor God's word while in fact misusing it.

- i. There are different ways that people do **not consent** to the truth of God's Word.
 - Some *deny* God's Word.
 - Some *ignore* God's Word.
 - Some *explain away* God's Word.
 - Some *twist* God's Word using it as a toy to be played with in debate and disputes.
- ii. One can be surrounded by God's truth; one can even memorize the Bible, and *not* have it effect the life for eternity. Curiosity or interest in God's Word without submission to it is a grave danger.
- iii. In our day – a time when we are overwhelmed with useless information – it is easy to regard the Bible as useless information or as a source of answers

to trivia questions, but not as a book with truth that confronts and transforms my life. Bible study is *not* trivial pursuit; to treat the Bible as a book of useless information is to misuse it.

d. **He is proud, knowing nothing:** This describes those who misuse God's Word. Yet, as all the proud, they don't see or admit to their lack of knowledge. And, like most proud people, they are able to convince others that they are *experts* in God's truth, when they actually misuse it.

i. To not allow God's Word to speak for itself – to put your own "spin" on it as modern politicians and public relations people do – is the worst kind of pride. It shows someone has more confidence in their own wisdom and opinions than in the straightforward truth of God. Surely, these proud people are those **knowing nothing**.

ii. It is nothing but *pride* that could make the preacher think that their stories, their anecdotes, their opinions, or their humor could be more important than the clear Word of God. Such stories and anecdotes and humor must be used to present the clear Word of God, not to replace it.

e. **Obsessed with disputes and arguments:** Those who misuse God's Word may be expert debaters on their current doctrinal hobby-horse; but their desire to constantly debate some aspect of doctrine shows their unwillingness to humbly receive the truth.

i. Paul isn't speaking about people who inquire or question in a genuine desire to learn; but those who ask questions or start discussion mainly to show others how smart they are.

f. **Envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions:** This is the fruit of the **disputes and arguments** of those who

misuse God's truth. Their presence in a church body is the source of all kinds of division and discontent; though they may appear to be experts on the Bible, they actually do damage to God's church. Therefore, Paul warned Timothy, "

From such withdraw yourself."

- i. Timothy should expect that such men would:
 - **Envy** him and his office (without admitting to it).
 - That they would create **strife** among the Christians.
 - That they would promote **reviling** of Timothy and other leaders in the church.
 - That they would be the source of **evil suspicions** - always suspecting Timothy and other leaders in the church of evil motives and plots.
- ii. Timothy needed this warning, because such dangerous people are not as obvious as one might think.
- iii. **Useless wranglings:** "Endless and needless discourses... The Greek word signifieth galling one another with disputes, or rubbing one against another, as scabbed sheep will, and so spreading the infection" (Trapp).

g. **Who suppose that godliness is a means of gain:** This is another characteristic of those who misuse God's truth. Their interest in the things of God is not entirely for God's glory but motivated in part by desire for wealth and comfort.

- i. "For these men all Christianity is to be measured by the gains it brings... Paul forbids the servants of Christ to have any dealings with such men." (Calvin)

- ii. Christianity is commonly presented today on the basis of what you will *gain* by following Jesus: personal success and happiness, a stronger family, a more secure life. These things may be true to some degree, but we must never market the gospel as a product that will fix every life problem.
- iii. When the gospel is marketed this way, it makes followers of Jesus who are completely unprepared for tough times. After all, if the “Jesus product” isn’t working, why not try another brand? Also, this sales approach takes the focus off Jesus Himself, and puts the focus on what He will give us. Many have their hearts set on the blessings, not the One who blesses us.
- iv. While not ignoring the blessings of following Jesus Christ, we must proclaim the need to follow Jesus because He is God, and we owe Him everything as our Creator. What is right before God, and what glorifies Him, is more important than whatever benefit we may gain.
- v. We need to see Christians who are more concerned with what glorifies God than with what benefits me.

h. **From such withdraw yourself:** Timothy is told to deliberately *not* associate with those who receive or present the gospel with this kind of marketing approach.

- i. “He does not only forbid Timothy from imitating them, but tells him to avoid them as harmful pests. Although they do not openly oppose the Gospel, but make a profession of it, yet their company is infectious. Besides, if the crowd sees us to be familiar with these men, there is a danger that they will use our friendship to insinuate themselves into its favour. We should therefore take great pains to make everyone understand that we are quite different from

them, and have nothing at all in common with them.”
(Calvin)

2. (6) *The true gain of godliness.*

Now godliness with contentment is great gain.

a. **Now godliness:** Paul told Timothy that those who misuse God’s Word wrongly think godliness is a means of material gain. Knowing his statement might be misunderstood, he followed up with an explanation.

b. **Now godliness with contentment is great gain:** It is true that godliness is **great gain**; but only when accompanied by **contentment**.

i. “The word here used for *contentment* is *autarkeia*... By it they meant a complete *self-sufficiency*. They meant a frame of mind which was completely independent of all outward things, and which carried the secret of happiness within itself. Contentment never comes from the possession of external things.”
(Barclay)

c. **With contentment:** When one does not live by “the itch for more,” and one’s life is not dominated by shopping for and acquiring material things, we can have the kind of **contentment** in God and in His will for our lives.

i. This is a slippery area in the Christian life. It is very easy to come up with reasons – excuses, that is – why these sins of greed and materialism don’t apply to us. But whenever we think getting something material, or getting more of it, will answer our life’s needs, we lack this contentment. Whenever we are deeply grieved at material loss, we lack this contentment. Whenever we get an inordinate pleasure from buying or having some material thing, we lack this contentment.

d. **Godliness with contentment is great gain:** Paul knew this kind of **contentment** first hand; here is his testimony in Php 4:11-13 : *Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

i. It is true that material possessions in and of themselves do not corrupt us; Paul could *abound* in material things and still keep it all in proper perspective. But too many use this truth to excuse their own materialism and carnal lack of contentment.

ii. **Contentment** is essential, and difficult for many reasons:

- We can only find contentment when our hearts are rooted in eternal things; and contentment is essential because it shows we are living with an eternal perspective, not only trying to feather an earthly nest.
- It is hard to be content, because our consumer culture feeds our lack of contentment, by rewarding us when we are discontent, and with advertising that tries to make us feel discontent without a product.
- It is hard to be content, because we almost always desire far more than we need.

e. **Godliness with contentment is great gain:** Godliness really can bring almost unbelievable contentment; but before it can, we must be *transformed by the renewing of your mind* (Rom 12:2) – to start putting material things in their proper priority next to spiritual things.

- i. It's easy for many Christians to say they have this contentment; but whether they have it or not is often more truthfully known by their spending and shopping habits. How much of a place does shopping and buying have in your life? How does material loss affect your happiness? How happy do you get from having some material thing?
- ii. When we live and act without contentment, we are trying to fill needs in our lives – a need to be “somebody,” a need to feel secure or cared for, a need to have excitement and newness in our lives – most people try to fulfill these needs with material things, but they can only really be met by a spiritual relationship with the God who made us.
- iii. Real **contentment** isn't too difficult for those whose real home is heaven. “It requires but little of this world's goods to satisfy a man who feels himself to be a citizen of another country, and knows that this is not his *rest*” (Clarke).

3. (7-8) *The heart of contentment.*

For we brought nothing into *this world*, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.

- a. **We brought nothing into this world:** A baby is born not only penniless, but without even a pocket to put pennies in. Just as certainly, **we can carry nothing out** – the things that make a man rich in this world mean nothing in the world to come.
- b. **It is certain we can carry nothing out:** A heart of contentment begins with seeing our material possessions and resources in an *eternal* perspective.

- i. It has been wisely observed that a moving trailer never follows a hearse. Everything one might take

with them to the world beyond is left behind. Gold is a precious commodity on earth; in heaven God uses it to pave the streets.

ii. Jesus once told a parable that has troubled some people. In Luk 16:1-14, He spoke of a dishonest manager, who was about to be called to account. Knowing he will be fired, he began to settle accounts with his master's debtors at terms favorable to the debtors, so they would treat him kindly when the master fired him. The master ended up complimenting the manager for his shrewd tactics (presumably before he fired him). The manager was praiseworthy for two reasons. First, he knew he would be called to account for his life and he took it seriously. Secondly, he took advantage of his *present* position to arrange a comfortable *future*. We can use our material resources *right now* for eternal good – even though we can't bring them with us.

iii. We **can carry nothing out** – but we can *send ahead* eternal blessing and reward through wise use of our resources right now.

c. **Having food and clothing:** After an eternal perspective, a heart of contentment will be humble, a heart that can be content with simple things.

i. Most of us become jaded over the years, and our over-stimulated culture is effective at producing this in us. Things that used to satisfy us are no longer good enough. The constant hunger for more and more, for more and better, for new and improved, all work against real contentment.

4. (9-10) *The folly of the greedy heart.*

But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts

which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

- a. **Those who desire to be rich:** Significantly, the **desire** for riches is far more dangerous than the riches themselves – and it isn't only the poor who desire to be rich, it is also the rich who want *more* riches.
 - i. Poor does not mean godly and rich ungodly; nor is it true the other way around. There were many remarkably godly men in the Bible who were almost unbelievably rich, such as Abraham, David, and Solomon.
 - ii. But the godly rich have the heart like the Psalmist in Psa 62:10 : *If riches increase, do not set your heart on them.*
- b. **Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare:** This desire for riches tempts our heart away from eternal riches and ensnares us in a trap few can escape – always dreaming of riches, and always setting one's heart on them.
 - i. The **desire to be rich** can really only be satisfied in Jesus Christ and satisfied with spiritual riches rather than material ones. Everything else falls short.
- c. **The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil:** The love of money can motivate any evil on this earth. There is no sin that cannot be committed for the sake of money.
- d. **Pierced themselves through with many sorrows:** This is the fate of those who live in the love of money. They are *not* satisfied. We sometimes want the

opportunity to find out if riches can satisfy, but we should trust the Word of God and the experience of many.

i. "So do these strangle, drown, poison their precious souls with profits, pleasures, and preferments, and many times meet with perdition and destruction, that is, with a double destruction, temporal and eternal, as some expound it." (Trapp)

5. (11-16) *True riches: serving a Great King.*

But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.

a. **But you, O man of God:** Timothy was commanded to be different from those who lived for riches and material wealth. He was to **flee** the proud arguments of those who misuse God's Word and who suppose that we should follow God just for what we can get out of it.

b. **Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness:** Instead of pride and riches, Timothy was to make these things his pursuit. These are things which are often not valued in our present age but are very valuable to God.

- i. This challenge to leave some things and follow hard after some other things isn't just directed to Timothy, but to everyone who would be a **man** [or woman] **of God** – as opposed to being a man of *this* world.
- c. **Fight the good fight of faith:** Going God's way – against the flow of this world – won't be easy. Therefore, Timothy had to have a soldier's determination.
 - i. God calls us to be fighters, but to fight **the good fight of faith** – a fight where some may lose a battle here and there, but they will carry on the fight with great determination until the war is over – when we **lay hold on eternal life**.
 - ii. Timothy was drafted into this war: **To which you were also called.** But Timothy also volunteered: **And have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.** Timothy had to consider both so as to set his thinking right for the fight. God had called him, and he had also freely chosen.
- d. **In the sight of God who gives life to all things:** Since Paul called Timothy to a difficult battle, it was good for him to know that the orders were given under this great God. Timothy had an obligation to serve the Creator who gave him life.
 - i. The denial of God as Creator has done wide damage in our culture. Some of the biggest damage has come from the simple fact that many people no longer believe they have a Creator they must honor and be accountable to.
- e. **Christ Jesus:** This was *who gave* Timothy the difficult command. Jesus Himself knew what it was to fulfill a difficult command, because He **witnessed the good**

confession before Pontius Pilate and Jesus did it in several ways.

- i. Jesus admitted the truth about Himself, agreeing with Pilate's statement that Jesus was the King of the Jews (Mat 27:11).
- ii. Jesus testified to Pilate about the sovereignty of God, saying *You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given to you from above* (Joh 19:11). Jesus let Pilate know that God was in charge, not Pilate.
- iii. Jesus was silent about specific accusations, refusing to defend Himself, but leaving His life in the will of God the Father (Mat 27:14). "For Christ made His *confession before Pilate* not in many words but in reality, that is by His voluntary submission to death" (Calvin).
- iv. In each of these ways, Jesus made a *good confession before Pontius Pilate*. When Timothy was told to live up to the *good confession* he made (1Ti 6:12), he was simply told to do what Jesus did.

f. **Until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing:** This was *how long* Timothy was supposed to fight the good fight. There is always danger that a good effort will simply not last long enough, and end in defeat.

g. **He who is:** Knowing who Jesus is equipped Timothy to fight the good fight. History is filled with example of armies that have been led to spectacular victories because the men knew and loved their leaders. Therefore, here Paul described Jesus to Timothy.

- i. He is **the blessed and only Potentate** – the One who alone has all power and strength, who rules over the universe from an occupied throne in heaven.

ii. He is the **King of kings and Lord of lords**; the majesty of man fades in comparison to the glory of Jesus. The richest, smartest, most influential persons on earth are midgets next to King Jesus.

iii. He **alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see**: He is holy. Jesus is not merely a super-man, He is the God-man; truly immortal without beginning or end; with a glory which if fully revealed would strike any human dead.

iv. **To whom be honor and everlasting power**: Knowing who this Jesus is should bring forth a response - not primarily, "what can He do for me?" but a response of simple and profound *worship* – declaring **honor and everlasting power** towards this great God. **Amen!**

h. **To whom be honor and everlasting power**: Paul praised the glory and honor of the exalted, enthroned Lord Jesus Christ. He is a unique man (**who alone has immortality**) and a glorified man (**unapproachable light**).

6. (17-19) *A final word to the rich.*

Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

a. **Rich in this present age**: This phrase puts it all in perspective. These ones might be rich now, but they must use their riches responsibly if they will be rich in the age to come.

- b. **Not to be haughty:** Pride is a constant danger with riches. It is very easy to believe that we are more because we *have* more than another man has.
- c. **Nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God:** God knows our tendency to trust in riches instead of in Him. He guards us against this danger because He wants us to trust in that which is most certain – in Him and not in **uncertain riches**.
- d. **Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give:** Being a giver, and doing good with our resources is what guards our heart from materialism and trusting in uncertain riches.
 - i. Many think the main reason for giving unto the Lord is because the church needs money. That isn't true. The most important reason to give is because *you* need to be a giver. It is God's way of guarding you against greed and trust in uncertain riches. God will provide for His work even if you do not give; but what will happen to *you*?
 - ii. If you do not give of your material things to the Lord's work, how will you be **storing up for [yourself] a good foundation for the time to come**? How will you **lay hold on eternal life**? Will there not be some – perhaps many – who do not enter heaven because the heart was really far more comfortable here on earth with its material rewards?
- e. **Lay hold on eternal life:** Paul's idea was to Timothy, "Leave the pursuit of money aside and be content with your work as a minister of the gospel. Your hand is not big enough to lay hold of two things. Therefore, since you can only have one, see that it is the vital thing. Lay hold on eternal life."

i. "From this it is evident that if he lays hold on eternal life, he will have to fight for it; and that if he has to fight, he can only fight by laying hold upon eternal life with tenacious grip." (Spurgeon)

7. (20-21) Conclusion: A final charge.

O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace be with you. Amen.

- a. **O Timothy:** Paul repeated a theme often used, challenging Timothy to distinguish between what comes from God (**that which was committed to your trust**), and what comes from man (**idle babblings**); and to guard against becoming enamored with what comes from man.
 - i. Paul had confidence in Timothy and he did trust him. Yet Paul also knew how great the power of seduction is, and how high the stakes are - so he warned, and warned, and warned again.

- b. **Guard what was committed to your trust:** The gospel is a **trust** committed to pastors like Timothy; but also, to all believers. And when that trust is broken, **some have strayed concerning the faith.** We must do all that we can to keep this **trust.**